DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 423 574 CS 509 918

TITLE Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (81st, Baltimore, Maryland, August 5-8, 1998). Radio-TV.

INSTITUTION Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.

PUB DATE 1998-08-00

NOTE 362p.; For other sections of these Proceedings, see CS 509 905-922.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Reports - Research (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC15 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Broadcast Journalism; Case Studies; Content Analysis; Females; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; National Surveys; *News Media; Political Campaigns; *Radio; Student Attitudes; *Television; Television Research

IDENTIFIERS China; Local Television Stations; *Media Coverage; *Television News

ABSTRACT

The Radio-TV section of the Proceedings contains the following 13 papers: "Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Nationwide Survey of Television Newsrooms" (Sonya Forte Duhe' and Erin Haynie); "Network Television News Coverage of the Environment and the Impact of the Electronic Newsletter 'Greenwire'" (Claudette Guzan Artwick); "Managing Single-Market Radio Clusters" (Greg Stefaniak); "A Content Analysis of 'Dateline NBC' and 'NBC Nightly News': The Infiltration of the Youformation Story into News Magazines and Mainstream News" (Jeff Demas); "Priming Reporters: A Study on How the Willie Horton Case Altered the Portrayal of Criminals" (James Devitt); "Constructing International Spectacle on Television: CCTV News and China's Window on the World, 1992-1996" (Tsan-Kuo Chang and Chen Yanru); "Advertising's Influence on Broadcast News Content: A Study of Student Attitudes" (Hubert W. Brown and Beth E. Barnes); "Women in Television News Management: Do They Make a Difference?" (Laura K. Smith and John W. Wright II); "They'd Rather Be in Pictures, or Would They?: A Content Analysis of Video Bite Bias during TV Network News Coverage of the 1992 and 1996 Presidential Campaigns" (Jon A. Shidler, Dennis T. Lowry, and Charles Kingsley); "The Relationship of Affiliation Change to Changes in Television News Ratings" (Marianne Barrett); "Learned Helplessness in Local Television News: A 12 Year Update" (Grace Ferrari Levine); "Television News Stand-Up Reports: A Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Market Case Study" (Patrick J. Sutherland); and "Youth Voters in 1996: Searching for Political Information from Television News" (Karon R. Speckman). (PA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 423 574

PROCEEDINGS OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION IN JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION

(81st, Baltimore, MD, August 5-8, 1998). Radio-Television.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. McGill
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CS509918

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

COMPUTER-ASSISTED REPORTING: A NATIONWIDE SURVEY OF TELEVISION NEWSROOMS

by

Sonya Forte Duhe', Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
College of Journalism and Mass Communications
Carolina Coliseum
Columbia, South Carolina 29209-1929
803 777-3321

and

Erin Haynie
Honors Undergraduate
University of South Carolina

This paper is being presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division, AEJMC, Baltimore, August 6, 1998.

ABSTRACT

This study, "Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Nationwide Survey of Television Newsrooms," reveals that computer-assisted reporting is prevalent in nearly three-quarters of tv newsrooms. However, computer-assisted reporting is employed only in its most basic forms – use of the Internet.

Fewer than half of the respondents said their newsroom uses spreadsheet, database manager, statistical and mapping software. However, data indicate that at least eight of ten newsrooms have the necessary hardware and software for information analysis.

"Computer-assisted Reporting: A Nationwide Survey of Television Newsrooms"

It is described as a revolution in terms of news-gathering. Pulitzer winners in each of the last six years used it to uncover racism in mortgage loans, medical malpractice, government waste, arson fraud, and lax building codes (Ciotta, 1997). It is said to turn ordinary reporters into super sleuths (Bland, 1991). It is hailed for its ability to give "ordinary" journalists and student reporters instant access to the inaccessible. It is computer-assisted reporting, or CAR.

Computer-assisted reporting is the umbrella term for the use of computers in news-gathering. Brant Houston, director of the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting, writes in his practical guide to computer-assisted reporting that, through the past decade, journalists' use of three basic tools have defined the term. At its most basic level, computer-assisted reporting is the use of spreadsheets, database managers and/or on-line resources. As journalists have become more sophisticated, other tools have joined these three: statistical and mapping software (Houston, 1996).

Nora Paul of the Poynter Institute breaks computer-assisted journalism down into four categories: reporting, research, reference, and rendezvous. Each of these categories are critical to news gathering and can be done without the use of a computer, but, as Paul points out, the computer can speed up, simplify and/or expand the range of work (1997).

Paul defines reporting as: "to announce or relate the result of a special search, examination, or investigation" (Paul, 1997, p. 1). Using a computer, reporters can conduct special examinations. Research, the second component of Paul's definition of computer-assisted journalism, also requires a special search or investigation. While reporting usually involves primary sources such as interviews, observation, or self-conducted computer analyses, research relies on secondary sources. Reporting, combined with research, allows the reporter to develop a complete news report (Paul, 1997).

Computer-assisted reference is defined by Paul as "consultation of sources of information" (Paul, 1997, p. 1). Virtual reference shelves on the Internet and CD-ROMS offer quick access to dictionaries, encyclopedias, gazetteers, almanacs, and glossaries (Paul, 1997). The Internet also provides "virtual communities" for rendezvous, Paul's fourth element in computer-assisted journalism.

Rendezvous is "a place which people customarily come in numbers" (Paul, 1997, p. 1). Paul believes "the ability to hang out, listen in, seek advice, and tap into other people's networks of sources is the newest and, perhaps, most exciting aspect of computer-assisted-journalism" (1997, p. 1). Listservs and newsgroups are examples of "virtual communities."

The use of computers in basic newsgathering, or computer-assisted reporting, has been growing in the 1990s. Bruce Garrison, director of the University of Miami CAR Research Project, surveyed the nation's newspapers on their use of online services in 1994 and 1995. Garrison found that 57% of dailies used some form of online service to solve informational problems. A year later, there was a considerable jump. Sixty-four percent of daily newspapers used some type of on-line services in the newsroom in 1995 (1996).

Editor and Publisher magazine said computer-assisted reporting is swarming over daily newspaper newsrooms. Educators and professionals agree that newspapers have been the leaders in computer-assisted reporting. Several nationwide surveys (Garrison, 1997; Ross & Middleberg, 1996) have been conducted to determine the use of computers in the print journalism media. Television news outlets, however, have largely been ignored by these studies. Where there has been research, the response rate was so small, it was "unreliable for drawing meaningful conclusions" about tv newsrooms (Ross & Middleberg, 1997).

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the frequency with which television newsrooms practice computer-assisted journalism. The results will also indicate the availability of necessary computer hardware and software for CAR. Research also will reveal what CAR skills journalists possess in the nation's tv newsrooms.

Furthermore, the researchers will examine whether news directors believe CAR skills are important for journalists in their newsrooms. This study will also determine what CAR skills news directors believe journalists *must have* in their newsrooms as well as the skills news directors *would like* journalists to possess.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Brief History of Computers in Television Newsrooms

For several decades, the only computers available to journalists were large systems known as mainframes. In the 1970s, some news organizations used them for production-oriented activities, but rarely used the mainframes as newsgathering tools. A few enlightened newspapers at this time were using the large systems for occasional data processing and analysis. However, this was done only for special projects, such as political poll data analysis (Garrison, 1996a).

The development (since 1980) of powerful statistical and relational database software programs for desktop computing set into motion an evolution in investigative and daily news-gathering strategies. Easier use, lowered economic barriers, and few regulations are responsible for the movement toward high-tech journalism (Garrison, 1997b). The trend to enlist computers as fundamental reporting tools had developed so quickly that scholarship and professional literature have not kept up with the exponential growth in use (Garrison, 1995a). However, professional and educational journalism publications have heralded computer-assisted reporting as the tool that will revolutionize reporting for almost two decades (*Editor & Publisher*, 1992; *The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors*, 1991; *Newspaper Research Journal*, 1994; *The Quill*, 1994; *American Journalism Review*, 1997).

The Revolutionary Tool

"'I really believe this is journalism's future,'" Brant Houston, director of the National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR), said at a press association meeting in 1995 (Garrison, 1995d, p. 14). "'Computers offer the best- and perhaps the only- hope of reviving serious journalism at a time when news organizations are distracted by entertainment and good looks,' says Bill Kovach, curator of the Nieman Foundation" (Fitzgerald, 1992a, p. 14).

Philip Meyer wrote in his 1991 book, The New Precision Journalism, "'They are raising the ante on what it takes to be a journalist'" (Friend, 1994 p. 63). Although Meyer was writing broadly about the application of scientific research methods to journalism, the current proliferation of popular and academic articles, the workshops offered around the country and the creation of a computer-assisted bulletin board on the Internet are evidence that journalists in the 21st century must possess computer-assisted reporting skills (Friend, 1994). "The 21st century journalist who can't maneuver through a file transfer protocol site, use a web search engine or manipulate a database is like a reporter who isn't familiar with the library's card catalogue system" (Garcia, 1997, p. 1).

Proponents of computer-assisted reporting say there is no doubt computers offer increased access to information. Since 1960, federal and state government agencies have shifted their records from paper to electronic format. In 1990, the federal government had at least one million computers and thousands of federal databases prepared with a wide range of software. These databases are increasing at an enormous rate (Semonche, 1993). Eventually, a reporter's request for local information from a county clerk's office or court or jail will yield computerized information. No paper record will exist (Friend, 1994). Computer-assisted reporting advocates insist the amount of information will only grow as more public records are computerized and private information is put on the market for sale (Garrison, 1995a).

Electronic data are also more in depth and are obtained faster than searching by traditional methods (Garrison, 1995a). Thus, computer-assisted reporting enables reporters to use statistical and database manager software to dig deeper and find patterns not possible by customary journalism techniques (Friend, 1994). Computer-assisted reporting advocates see this as the tool's most valuable component.

The content of news has always relied on the pronouncements, interpretations, statements and proclamations of officials (Koch, 1996). Typically, reporters are at the mercy of their sources to explain and interpret volumes of data and information (Garrison, 1995a). These sources are usually vested interests, organizing information to manipulate the public (Fitzgerald, 1992). Most reporters are conduits of the manipulated data, carrying it from the desk of officials to the general public (Koch, 1996).

Rather than rely on "authorities," journalists can now use electronic technologies to approach analyses of large datasets without the bureaucratic filters and spins. The journalist's record is then value-neutral, replacing anecdotal tales and interpreted statistics with records of actual behavior of institutions and individuals. Thus, reporters can create challenging reports that may not confirm the established views of "reality" (Friend, 1994; see also Fitzgerald, 1992; see also Hansen, Ward, Conners, Neuzil, 1994). When the *Investigative Reporters and Editors Journal* asked journalists who have done ground-breaking stories using computers to talk about the effects of computer-assisted reporting in the journalism industry Dave Davis replied, "'We're not waiting for other people to do things and then tell us about it. We're actually in a position where we can do it ourselves'" (Cline, 1994, p. 15).

When reporters deal with the record itself, examining the information in a politically neutral way, they do not need official attribution (Friend, 1994). Until recently, attributed-style journalism was sufficient. "'That's the way it is,' Walter Cronkite insisted at the end of his hourly TV show. And we believed him" (Koch, 1996, p. 17). The public's belief in officials and experts has eroded over the past 25 years. As a result, people suspect not only the public message, but also the messenger who carries the bureaucrat's words. This skepticism makes the decline in news readers and news viewers in the past two decades no surprise and every indication shows only continued decline (Koch).

News that does no more than quote officials and experts is dead (Koch, 1994). Old-style news can not compete with the evolving online information services. "I have access to better and more complete data than the traditional reporter whose function, in theory if not in practice, was to fill me in on the world we share and to explain its changes to me" (Koch, 1996, p. 20). Computer-assisted reporting can create a link between consequence and event, taking the reporter and the reader/viewer "...through the antecedents of an occurrence to demonstrate who is right and what is simply self-serving-if-attributed hooey" (Koch, 1994, p. 21). Computer-assisted reporting gives news people the means to obtain facts and conclusions on which everyone in the world agrees and then ask the officials to respond. It allows a reporter with a general education to challenge an official's interpretation of the events in question (Koch, 1996). Computer-assisted journalism brings an end to "he-said" or "she-said" journalism which only makes each story exactly as truthful as the person, expert or official the reporter quotes (Koch, 1997).

Computer-assisted reporting advocates also point to on-line services as the second primary ingredient to this new reporting tool. There are two major subdivisions of on-line resources for information gathering. The first is commercial on-line services such as CompuServe, America Online and Prodigy. They also include hundreds of more specialized services like Nexis/Lexis, Westlaw and DataTimes. The second on-line research subdivision is the Internet. The Internet links a wide range of computer systems and includes countless business and other commercial links. Its use is dominated by the World Wide Web (Garrison, 1996a).

On-line information searching is faster and more thorough than traditional methods and helps journalists solve some of their most challenging jobs (Garrison, 1996a; see also Murrie, 1987). Most computer-assisted reporting proponents agree that the same amount of information can be found in one hour of on-line research that would take a month of manual searching (Resnick, 1993). One of the greatest on-line access advantages for journalists is that electronic libraries seldom close. Reporters doing news research are no longer restricted to normal business hours (Garrison, 1995c). Going on-line gives reporters the key to the world's largest library 24 hours a day (Resnick, 1993).

Getting on-line assists reporters looking for sources and people to interview. In only a few minutes, journalists can locate experts with certain types of experience and find people with opinions and ideas that can bring insight to a story (Paul, 1995). "Cyberspace is teeming with virgin sources and experts overlooked and unquoted by the media masses. It's just a matter of hanging out at the best virtual watering hole" (Grossman, 1994, p. 10).

New story ideas abound on the Internet. Certain computer-assisted reporting techniques enable journalists to find out what "people in the know" know and even spot trends before they happen (Paul, 1995). Journalists also can screen story ideas to avoid doing stories that other news organizations have reported (Murrie, 1987). Searching on-line databases for background information can make reporters instant experts in a subject (Murrie). Reporters can research a topic before they cover it or find out how others have covered the subject by going on-line. Articles, reports and transcripts are just some of the resources available for background information. Journalists can locate statistics and check facts on-line. They can verify specific information taken from an interview or find data that complete or enhance the story (Paul). Source documents that are the foundation to understanding a beat, as well as basic public records useful to a beat, are also on-line. This will aid the journalist assigned to cover a particular area (Paul).

Journalists searching for these types of information (sources, story ideas, background articles, source documents, and public records) on-line have several techniques available to locate what they need. Electronic mail is one of the computer-assisted reporting techniques journalists can use. There is even a free service on the Internet for journalists that links them to public information officers and ultimately experts at universities and other scientific and cultural institutions. Journalists must only understand electronic mail to use the service. Reporters can send a message to PROFNET detailing the type of source or information needed for their story. Within 24 hours, PROFNET will respond in the form the journalist specifies, electronic mail, phone, fax or mail (Callahan, 1995).

Computer-assisted reporting proponents also point to electronic mail as an easier way to contact individuals for certain types of information. Electronic mail has advantages over the telephone when reporters have simple inquiries. Using electronic mail can be a valuable time saver, avoiding the "...dreaded late-afternoon phone tag" (Callahan, 1995, p. 2).

Agencies are also beginning to send press releases via electronic mail. Reporters can receive the electronic mail release in a matter of minutes while the competition is waiting for a fax. The advantage of the electronically-mailed press release is clearly the time it saves. With the proliferation of electronic mail, computer-assisted journalism supporters believe this mode of communication will become more useful over time (Callahan, 1995).

Listservs are also ways journalists can get on-line and use electronic mail to find information. These electronic mail groups allow people interested in the same subject to exchange ideas and information. The people who subscribe to a listserv are usually very knowledgeable about the topic of the list. Reporters can sign up on listservs that cover their issues of interest and hear what the experts are talking about. Monitoring the lists enables reporters to pick up trends and story ideas. Journalists can also send messages to the listservs, requesting information or sources. There are tens of thousands of listservs, and they are growing at a rapid rate. Listservs are growing so fast that there is no single comprehensive source to find out what is on the Internet (Callahan, 1995; see also Paul, 1995).

News groups, unlike listservs, do not use electronic mail but are on-line sources of valuable information to a reporter. Distributed on the Internet, news groups are bulletin board style messages posted publicly and are available for anyone to read and respond to. Reporters can get story ideas, find sources to interview and seek people who know about a specific topic with a news group. The messages posted often help a reporter develop a new angle or alert a reporter to information he/she was unaware existed (Paul, 1995).

Internet bulletin board services offer some of the same resources to a reporter, and do not require an electronic mail account. Bulletin boards are usually operated by individuals or groups and cover almost any topic. They often contain files and message areas. Reporters can locate statistics and files with information on a bulletin board. They can also find story ideas from the message postings and tap into a community of experts and people with experience in a particular area. Commercial bulletin boards for forums and special interest groups have virtual libraries that help a journalist get background information, statistics and reports (Paul, 1995).

Most of the commercial on-line services have news filters that allow a reporter to set up a profile on a topic of interest to them. The service will then filter news feeds into the service and match the reporter's profile against the news stories. Any match will be sent to the reporter's electronic mailbox, so an account is necessary to use a news filter. News filters help keep journalists informed of new developments in their areas of interest. Journalists can find current articles from around the world that create a background file on the topic the reporter is covering (Paul, 1995).

Commercial databases can contain articles, statistical reports, transcripts and speeches. Journalists can use on-line databases for researching and getting background articles. They can also locate people who can talk knowledgeably about a topic because they have written about it or have been quoted in articles. Finding out how other reporters have covered the topic and if the subject has been covered too much by the media is another way reporters can use on-line databases (Paul, 1995). Many newspaper researchers and editors say computer databases comprise one of the best research tools since the advent of the encyclopedia (Rambo, 1987). Computer-assisted reporting advocates believe database searching can make reporters instant experts (Murrie, 1987).

Computer-assisted journalism advocates cite other compelling reasons for integrating the tool in newsrooms. They claim a properly used personal computer can add accuracy and precision to a news story. Reporters can do fundamental fact-checking and find information that will make their stories stronger. The technical reliability of computers also adds precision to stories when reporters are managing large numbers of sources or amounts of data (Garrison, 1995a).

Reporters who use software to neutrally analyze the behaviors of individuals and institutions or go on-line for information will have increased flexibility in the subjects they cover. The boundaries of specific beats disappear when journalists use electronic background reporting. It allows a generally-trained journalist to cross between topical boundaries previously the domain of specialists. For the employer, this greater flexibility translates into greater productivity as reporters are empowered to cover any assignment (Koch, 1991a).

The speed with which reporters can successfully complete a story is also improving the productivity of the newsroom. Journalists using a personal computer for organizing and presenting information and computer-assisted reporting techniques will be much more productive with their time allocated to stories and projects (Garrison, 1995a). Reporters will save time but gather more information (Garrison, 1997b). They will be able to get broader-based stories that are bigger and deeper than their earlier work (Garrison, 1995a).

To physically send a reporter to a location to get the same information he/she could obtain on-line, or have a reporter go through paper records that could easily be analyzed in an electronic form, is much more costly. Transportation, food, housing and other expenses mount quickly. There is the cost of the information itself, photocopies, clerical time and the reporter's time that add up, as well. Computer-assisted reporting saves news organizations money (Garrison, 1995a). It is one of the few areas in newsrooms this decade where jobs are being created (Ciotta, 1996).

Proponents of computer-assisted reporting also argue that the techniques have a significant impact on routine reporting, not just big, investigative projects. Information that was once hard to access can now be quickly gathered for daily breaking news. The breadth and depth of this information has also increased (Garrison, 1997b). Reporters can use more thorough, more accurate and more appropriate information in the ordinary, routine stories. Instead of generalizations supported by few examples, reporters are able to list specific cases and how many of those specific cases exist. Journalists can use more diverse and better qualified sources located on-line for the routine stories, as well (Garrison, 1995a).

Steve Outing, a writer for *Editor and Publisher Magazine*, highlighted in an on-line article how computer-assisted reporting does not have to involve big, time-consuming, expensive special projects. He also noted they do not have to be serious, either (1995). Many computer-assisted reporting proponents point to its ability to help develop better feature stories. For example, a newspaper reporter charted the famous Pennsylvania groundhog "Punxsutawney Phil's" ability to predict the onset of winter. The reporter successfully de-bunked the groundhog's prophetic powers. Using computer-assisted reporting techniques for feature stories and for daily, routine reporting increases the quality of local reporting (Garrison, 1995a).

Increasing the quality of journalism means a more competitive news organization. Computer-assisted reporting permits newsrooms of all sizes and markets to handle stories that other news outlets are working on or thinking about doing. At the individual level, it also means reporters can offer stories other journalists might not have the know-how to accomplish. In today's job market, any edge can translate into a better opportunity or a promotion (Garrison, 1995a).

Proponents tout computer-assisted reporting as a tool for all news organizations and all reporters. It does not have to be expensive, but it is absolutely necessary for the future of journalism (Garrison, 1995d). A news organization can use an existing personal computer, and for a few hundred dollars buy the proper software to do computer-assisted reporting. On-line searching costs can also be controlled by using free or low-cost services at a central location in the newsroom. Most of the techniques do not require special skills, but simply a familiarity with computer software users' guides and a willingness to learn (Garrison, 1995a). Computer-assisted reporting advocates like Tom Koch have written books to demonstrate how the techniques can be used by news organizations that lack resources (1991a).

Concerns About Computer-Assisted Reporting

Practicing computer-assisted reporting can be problematic. One of the growing complaints focuses more on problems with the Freedom of Information Act rather than the techniques, themselves. Most freedom of information laws were written at a time when records were paper documents in filing cabinets. Many of the statutes are sketchy as to how they apply to the vast amount of records that the government now keeps in an electronic format (Bunker, 1996). Reporters seeking routine information often discover that because the material had been computerized, it is more difficult to obtain. Many government agencies believe that records somehow cease to be public when they are transferred to electronic form (Bagby, 1991). Dan Paul, an attorney specializing in First Amendment law told a *Presstime* staff writer, “’There’s a real fear technology could eviscerate the access right’” (Bagby, p. 6). A *Washington Post* writer told *Editor and Publisher Magazine*, “Computers have rendered the Freedom of Information Act ‘obsolete in many ways.’ Since the FoI Act remains a ‘law written for paper records, I am worried that we face an erosion in our ability to get access to public records’” (Bland, 1989b, p. 35).

Although Electronic Freedom of Information Act (EFoIA) bills have been introduced in Congress each session since 1991, the federal government has yet to act (Hernandez, 1996). Many states have neglected the computer access issue, as well. Those states that have examined the problem are not prepared to set policy (Prime, 1994). Brant Houston told *The Quill* that often the judiciary is not technically savvy, or lacks advice. He also believes state administrative agencies are often scared by the technology they administer (Prime).

Computer-assisted journalism projects often involve large quantities of information, yet the actual cost of retrieving information from a government computer is only pennies a record. However, steep costs can effectively block access to computerized records. Cash-strapped agencies that face huge expenses to upgrade their own computer systems are charging enormous fees for access to data. Some states see electronic records as a money maker (Prime, 1994). Agencies are allowed to charge a "nominal" fee for providing records under the Freedom of Information Act and many state records laws. These laws were written before personal computers were available. Therefore, many officials still charge fees identical to the prices for hard-copy paper documents. News organizations argue that individual documents electronically gathered (five thousand pages of paper can be stored on one computer disk) are in essence one record and that a few hundred dollars for a computer tape holding these records would be much more reasonable (Shaw, 1994).

Some computer-assisted reporting advocates cite the trend toward privatization of information by the government as a barrier to access. When government agencies draw a distinction between public access to printed information and its right to computerized information, it seems to promote the private sector as the data distributor. Public information in federal databases costs between fifteen and thirty dollars per hour of labor. For the same information from a private database vendor, projected costs are fifty to one-hundred-twenty-five dollars per hour. Higher costs mean less access to information (Semonche, 1993).

Once a reporter has the funds and is allowed access to a database, still more problems arise. "...Don't let the hype fool you---it's hard work!...The tool demands "...reporting on the front end to figure out which data best answers the questions you want to ask; reporting in the middle, when you interview not just sources but the database in your computer; and reporting in the back end, when you put into context human faces with the numbers" (McIntosh, 1993, p. 23). Reporters must have specialized computer and statistical skills to effectively manipulate a database. Those who do not will be "locked out" of effective access to digitized records (Seminche, 1993). A journalist must also have the skill to sift and sort through information. A reporter skilled in computer technologies must still know what he or she is looking for to achieve the journalistic result. The information in a database can be overwhelming (Miller, 1997).

Inaccurate information in databases is another concern for journalists using computer-assisted reporting techniques. Data are not trustworthy simply because they are in a computer. A reporter must know the information source, how the data were put into the computer and all of its drawbacks (McIntosh, 1993). *Los Angeles Times* reporter Dwight Morris warned journalists in *Editor and Publisher Magazine*, "'Remember this: Databases are put together by people who make $5 an hour'" (Fitzgerald, 1992b, p. 15). There have been cases in which reporters have taken raw data from government files for a story. Only after publication did they learn the information was inaccurate (Steele & Cochran, 1995). Reporters must continuously search databases for "dirty data." Information sources are often dated, as well. It takes time for data to be compiled, formatted, packaged and distributed (Miller, 1997). Most databases only contain information from the year 1980 to the present. A few databases reach into the 1970s. This can pose a problem if a reporter is trying to research an event that happened earlier (Williams, 1994).

Computer-assisted reporting advocates are also aware of the growing conflict between the media and the public over access to electronic data that might invade peoples' privacy (Hartman, 1990). Once a reporter obtains a database and "cleans up" the information, what they do with the data can become a problem. "'Once reporters get a gleam in their eye, they sometimes want to get everything about everybody,'" a *Seattle Times* editor told the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Miller, 1988, p. 38).

Journalists who practice computer-assisted reporting should not only be wary when using databases, but when using on-line services as well. Information off the Internet may be the most problematic of the electronically gathered material (Miller, 1997). The quality of information is often unknown. It can easily contain mistakes and inaccuracies. Stories, reports and theories on the Internet could be superseded by new information. Original authors of Internet information may be difficult to track down, as well (Koch, 1997; see also Miller, 1997). An article on the Poynter Institute's computer-assisted reporting web page cautions that the Internet is uncontrolled because there are no standards for the look, navigation, quality or organization of information. The Institute's rule for on-line searching is "Browser beware" (Poynter Institute, 1997a).

Another concern for reporters using on-line services are the skills it takes to successfully locate the desired information. It is critical that a journalist understands how a commercial database is compiled and how the search engine works before using it. Otherwise, the searches will provide overwhelming amounts of information and grow to be very expensive. Journalists using the world wide web must also stay focused in their search. It is easy to wander the Internet for hours and never find the needed information. Reporters using news filters also must remain focused, carefully selecting their filter to avoid getting irrelevant information or excluding important data. Subscribing to listservs can create an enormous amount of traffic in a reporter's electronic mail box. Journalists should be aware of the high volume of messages before joining a listserv and use a moderated list if it is available (Paul, 1995).

Regardless of the problems a journalist encounters with databases and on-line information, computer-assisted reporting advocates agree that the benefits far outweigh the costs (Koch, 1991).

Research Questions

The overall objective of this study is to assess the practice of computer-assisted reporting in television newsrooms nationwide. By examining the use of computers in television newsrooms, the researcher will determine the extent of computer-assisted reporting and the potential for such reporting.

This study also will determine the level of computer-assisted reporting expertise news directors say journalists *must have* in their newsrooms and what skills news directors *would like* journalists to have in their newsrooms.

Specifically, the study addressed the following research questions:

1. How are computers used in television newsrooms?

2. What computer hardware and software is available in television newsrooms?

3. To what extent is computer-assisted reporting being conducted in television newsrooms? What is the use of the Internet, spreadsheet, database managers, statistical and mapping software?

4. What do news directors say are the computer skills *necessary* to work in their newsrooms and to be more desirable for television newsrooms?

5. What skills do news directors *want* journalists to have in their newsrooms?

METHODOLOGY

To address the research questions, a national survey of television news directors from the most recent listing of active members of the Radio and Television News Directors Association was conducted by mail during the fall of 1997. RTNDA members were chosen as research subjects because this group is the most comprehensive in its respective field.

Four hundred-twenty television news directors belonging to RTNDA were selected. These were news directors in the United States; none were selected from the RTNDA list outside the United States. To increase response rate, researchers made follow-up phone calls to subjects who did not initially respond to the mail survey. An identical survey was sent via facsimile.

The researchers created a one page – back and front—questionnaire with a total of 27 questions. Section one of the questionnaire asked respondent identification, including call letters, city, state, network affiliate and ADI. The researcher also asked for news staff size.
Another section of the survey sought computer use information, including hardware and software available, the applications of the software, and Internet use. The researcher also asked the extent of the use of the software and the Internet, and for descriptions of stories using the computer (if applicable).

The remainder of the survey applied only to news directors where computer-assisted reporting is practiced in their newsroom. News directors were asked to state the importance of the Internet and spreadsheet software and/or database manager software. Respondents were also asked if they had any concerns about the information obtained from spreadsheets or database managers.

The researchers sought to address news directors' value of reporters' computer skills. News directors were asked two separate questions regarding the computer skills a reporter *must* possess to get hired in television newsrooms and the computer skills news directors *would like* reporters to possess.

Respondents also were asked whether a computer-assisted reporting training program is available for their news staff and if so, what type of program exists. The survey asked news directors to select or describe the model of computer-assisted reporting practiced at their station.

DATA

Of the 420 television news directors who were selected, after initial and follow-up surveys, a total of 197 (47%) responded. Forty-four of the subjects (22%) were from television stations in large media markets (ADI 1-30); 74 subjects (38%) were from stations in medium media markets (ADI 31-100); and 71 subjects (36%) were from stations in small media markets (ADI 100+). Eight of the respondents' (4%) media market size was indeterminable.

Of the respondents, forty-five news directors (23%) were from television stations affiliated with ABC; 51 news directors (26%) were from CBS affiliate stations; 54 news directors (27%) were from television stations affiliated with NBC; 22 news directors (11%) were from Fox affiliate stations; and 22 news directors (11%) responded from stations with no particular network affiliation (cable stations, telemundo, etc.) Three respondents' (2%) station affiliation was indeterminable.

Computer Use in Television Newsrooms- Available Hardware/Software

Almost all of the news directors (98%) indicated computers are currently used in their newsrooms. Only four respondents (2%) said that their television station did not use computers, but each indicated they planned to purchase computers within the next year. One of the respondents whose newsroom had no computers was from a medium market. The remaining three respondents were from small markets.

Most of the respondents (94%) whose newsroom is equipped with computers use an IBM compatible. Only one respondent (1%) said Macintosh computers were used at his/her television station. Several respondents (5%) indicated their newsroom uses both IBM compatible and Macintosh computers. In addition to desktop computers, almost half of the news directors (40%) said their reporters use portable computers to aid in covering the news.

Of the newsrooms that use computers, nearly all of the respondents (95%) said their station uses newsroom software. Newstar newsroom software is the most popular among respondents (20%), followed by AP Newscenter (18%), DCM (16%), Comprompter ENR (12%) and Basys (10%). The remaining respondents used a variety of other newsroom software programs including, Avid Newsview and Syscom. Eight respondents (4%) have more than one newsroom software program available to their staff.

When asked how reporters in the newsrooms use computers, more than three-quarters of the respondents (77%) said for word processing. Microsoft Word is the word processing software used by more than half of the respondents (52%). Word Perfect software program follows in popularity (20%) for word processing. Twenty subjects (11%) specified that more than one word processing software program is available to their news staff.

Three-quarters of the respondents (75%) said their newsroom operates a web site. Of those, one-third (33%) are NBC affiliates; 26 percent are CBS affiliates; 21 percent are ABC affiliates; 12 percent are Fox affiliates and the remainder are independent and cable-operated affiliates. When cross-tabulating whether the respondent had a home page on the Internet with the station's network affiliation, it is statistically significant at the .05 level.

(Table 1 About Here)

Extent of Computer-Assisted Reporting in Television Newsrooms

To begin to determine the overall objective of this research, assessing the practice of computer-assisted reporting in television stations nationwide, respondents were asked if their news staff conducts computer-assisted reporting. Nearly three-quarters of the news directors (74%) said yes; 26 percent said no. Of those who do not practice computer-assisted reporting, more than half (56%) said they planned to begin using computer-assisted reporting—most of those within the year. (It is important to note that although a definition of computer-assisted reporting was given in the survey, use of the Internet, and/or spreadsheets and/or database managers, etc., eleven respondents said their news staff did not practice computer-assisted reporting, but indicated their staff used the computer tools that are included in the term. Such data suggest that the actual number of news rooms conducting computer-assisted reporting may be even higher than 74 percent.)

When asked what model of computer-assisted reporting best describes their television station, more than half of the news directors (68%) said "a few reporters specialize in computer-assisted reporting;" several news directors (13%) indicated "all reporters have knowledge of computer-assisted reporting;" other news directors (19%) chose to describe the model for their station in their own words. Many of those descriptions resembled the statement "a few reporters specialize in computer-assisted reporting."

When asked in what ways does your staff conduct computer-assisted reporting, more than three-quarters (78%) said they used the Internet.

(Table 2 About Here)

Of those, 69 respondents (50%) indicated their newsroom uses the Internet on a daily basis; 56 newsrooms (41%) use the Internet on a weekly basis and 10 newsrooms (7%) use the Internet on a monthly basis.

When asked to assess the value of the Internet as a reporting tool, more than half of the news directors (66%) said the Internet was important. Only 21 news directors (15%) responded that the Internet was not important. Some (18%) said they were not sure of its value. Several respondents who indicated the Internet is used in their newsroom did not assess its frequency of use or its value to their news staff as a reporting tool.

Of those who use the Internet for computer-assisted reporting, more than 6 of 10 news directors (66%) said local providers of on-line services were preferred. Only 44 of the newsrooms (28%) who use the Internet for computer-assisted reporting employ nationwide on-line service providers, such as America Online and Mindspring. Several respondents who use the Internet did not name their Internet provider.

News directors also were asked to provide recent examples of how Internet research assisted their staff in reporting the news. Respondents answers ranged from comparing airline ticket rates for travel segments to exposing the dangers of lead and cadmium in children's toys. Many newsrooms use the Internet to monitor their state legislature and find crime statistics.

News directors also said their news staff pinpointed local speeding traps through the Internet. Routine fact-checking and getting background information for stories were common answers from respondents.

Although listservs and electronic bulletin boards are considered on-line aids for news reporting, news directors were asked to specifically indicate whether these tools were used to practice computer-assisted reporting. One-fifth of the respondents (20%) said listservs are used by reporters in their newsroom. Regarding electronic bulletin boards, one-fifth of the respondents (20%) said their news staff uses them as news reporting tools.

More than half (64%) of the respondents said their news staff uses electronic mail as a computer-assisted reporting tool. News directors named many different electronic mail programs used for computer-assisted reporting, but respondents indicated Eudora Light (15%) was used the most. This program was followed by Netscape (10%), and cc:Mail (7%). Few news directors (5%) said more than one electronic mail program is available to their staff. Regarding in-house electronic mail systems, one quarter (25%) of the respondents indicated their news staff uses a program that is solely within the newsroom for sending and receiving messages.

Although more than three-quarters of the respondents indicated their reporters use the Internet or on-line services as a tool for computer-assisted reporting, fewer than one-fifth of the news directors (17%) said their reporters use spreadsheet software. More news directors said their newsroom used database manager software (23%) as computer-assisted reporting tools.

(See Table 2)

It is interesting to note that many respondents indicated spreadsheet/database manager software is available to their news staff. More than half of the respondents (55%) said their newsroom computers are equipped with spreadsheet software. Of those, 64 percent use Excel; 24 percent use Lotus 123; four percent use Quatro Pro and 8 percent have more than one type of spreadsheet software available to their news staff.

Almost one-third of the respondents (31%) said database manager software is available to their news staff. Of those, more than half (53%) use Access; 16 percent use Filemaker Pro; three per cent use Paradox; 26 percent use some other type of database manager software and two percent have more than one database manager software program available to their news staff.

Due to the similarities between spreadsheet software and database manager software programs, subjects were asked to assess the frequency of use and value of the programs as computer-assisted reporting tools. Respondents indicated most television stations that practice computer-assisted reporting use spreadsheets and/or database managers on a monthly basis (28%); fewer (9%) said their news staff uses these tools on a weekly basis. Ten percent said spreadsheet and/or database manager software are used in reporting the news on a daily basis.

Unlike the perceived importance of the Internet, just more than one-fifth (22%) of the respondents said spreadsheet and/or database manager software were important to reporting in their newsroom. More than one-third of the news directors (39%) indicated spreadsheet and/or database manager software was NOT important, while four of ten news directors (40%) were not sure of their importance.

When asked if there were concerns about the information contained in spreadsheet and/or database manager software, more than one-third of the news directors (37%) responded yes. News directors cited source inaccuracies as the main reason they are wary about the information found on these computer-assisted reporting tools. However, more than one-half of the news directors (63%) said they had NO problems with the information in spreadsheets and/or database managers.

Regarding the use of statistical software (such as SPSS and SAS) as a computer-assisted reporting tool, most respondents (88%) said their newsroom does not use it. Only 23 (12%) of the 144 news directors who said their news staff practices computer-assisted reporting indicate that they use statistical software. Similarly, fewer than one-third (29%) indicated their newsroom uses mapping software.

(See Table 2)

When asked if their station trained reporters in computer-assisted reporting, the majority of news directors (62%) said no. For the 51 respondents (38%) who said their station offers a computer-assisted reporting training program, most (35%) use more than one type. In-house classes (20%) and coaching as needed (20%) are also popular training styles. One-on-one tutoring is conducted in nine of the respondents' (18%) newsrooms. Few respondents bring in outside consultants (1%) or use local college or university classes (1%) to teach reporters computer skills.

Computer Skills Reporters *Must* Possess for Employment

Only those news directors whose news staff practices computer-assisted reporting were asked to determine the computer skills a reporter *must* possess to get hired at their stations. One hundred thirty-nine news directors responded. Of those, more than half (53%) indicated newsroom software skills are required of reporters to get a job at their station. When cross-tabulating stations requiring newsroom software skills with network affiliation, it was statistically significant at the .05 level.

(Table 3 About Here)

Nearly 5 of 10 respondents (48%) said reporters seeking employment must possess word-processing software skills. Regarding Internet skills, 24 news directors (17%) marked such skills as essential. When cross-tabulating whether reporters must have word-processing skills and whether reporters *must have* Internet skills with network affiliation, both are statistically significant at the point .05 level.

(Table 4 About Here)

(Table 5 About Here)

In addition, 19 percent of the respondents said knowing how to use electronic mail is a necessity for getting a reporting job. No news directors said spreadsheet software, database manager software, statistical software, or mapping software skills *are necessary* for a reporter to get a job at their television station.

Computer Skills News Directors *Would Like* Reporters to Possess

Again, only those news directors whose stations practice computer-assisted reporting were asked to select the computer skills they would prefer their news staff to possess. Although just more than half of the news directors indicated newsroom software skills are necessary at their stations, nearly nine of 10 (86%) said they WOULD LIKE reporters to have newsroom software skills. Similarly, more than 8 of 10 news directors (82%) indicated knowledge of word processing software is necessary for reporters. When cross-tabulating whether news directors would like reporters to have word processing skills and network affiliation, it is statistically significant at the .05 level.

(Table 6 About Here)

Regarding Internet skills, most news directors (86%) would like reporters to possess these skills as well. More than three-quarters of the respondents (77%) want their reporters to have knowledge of electronic mail.

While no news directors said journalists *must have* spreadsheet, database manager, statistical software or mapping software skills, it is important to note that news directors *would like* their reporters to have such skills. More than one-third of the respondents (35%) said they would like reporters to possess spreadsheet software skills; one-quarter (25%) would prefer reporters to have database manager software skills; three of 10 (30%) statistical software skills; and nearly one-quarter of news directors (24%) who answered this section of the survey said they would like reporters to have mapping software skills.

Conclusions

While recent surveys of computer-assisted reporting in the print media indicate that computer-assisted reporting techniques are inundating in newspaper newsrooms, this study reveals that CAR is prevalent in nearly three-quarters of the television newsrooms surveyed. However, it is important to note that CAR is only employed in its most basic forms—Internet and on-line services.

Nonetheless, the research findings offer computer-assisted reporting advocates an assessment of computer use in television newsrooms. Respondents said they use the Internet more than any other computer-assisted reporting tool. Similarly, more than half of the respondents said their news staff uses electronic mail to aid in news reporting. Fewer than half of the respondents said their newsroom uses spreadsheet, database manager, statistical and mapping software.

However, the data indicate that more than eight of 10 of the respondents' newsrooms (86%) are equipped to perform information analysis with spreadsheet or database manager software and the necessary hardware. But interestingly, news directors often said such software is irrelevant to reporting, or believe the tools are too costly in both time and money.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that no news directors *require* reporters to possess spreadsheet and database manager software skills to get a job in their newsroom. However, more than one-third of the respondents said they *would like* journalists in their newsroom to possess spreadsheet software skills and one-quarter *would like* their reporters to possess database manager skills.

For those stations that do not practice computer-assisted reporting, even in the most basic forms, often their news directors cited the monetary costs of the Internet and on-line services and a lack of human resources as the reason. Some also said they did not see a need for computer-assisted reporting in their newsrooms.

The data suggest that NBC affiliates are more likely to operate a web site. In fact, it is statistically significant when cross tabulating network affiliation with web sites. The researchers believe this may reflect the prevalence of MSNBC.

It is evident that news directors are somewhat unaware of the power of computer-assisted reporting to improve the products of their news staff. News directors who returned the surveys with written comments often dismissed the value of the elementary and advanced computer-assisted reporting practices. It is also clear that the nation's broadcast journalists may not fully comprehend the meaning of the term computer-assisted reporting. News directors returned surveys with inconsistent information. For example, several news directors said computer-assisted reporting was not practiced at their station, but marked their news staff use the Internet or electronic mail to supplement traditional reporting practices. These findings illustrate to computer-assisted reporting advocates the need to increase their efforts to revolutionize reporting. While proponents' messages have had a positive impact on the newspaper industry, broadcast journalists have been slow to see computer-assisted reporting's merits.

The research also proves helpful for journalism educators. Although news directors do not require reporters seeking employment to possess all of the skills needed to practice computer-assisted reporting, many would like reporters to have these skills. Educators can use this study to mold curricula that will give young broadcast journalists the skills they need to be more marketable in their careers.

REFERENCES

Bagby, M. A. (1991). Computerized Public Records: Boon, Nuisance, or Threat? Presstime, 13, 6-8.

Bland, D. (1989a). Database journalism grows in importance. Editor and Publisher, 122, (26) 35.

Bland, D. (1989b). Have Computers rendered the FoIA obsolete? Editor and Publisher, 122, (26) 35.

Bland, D. (1991). Computers Can Turn Ordinary Reporters Into Super Sleuths. American Society of Newspaper Editors Bulletin, 729-737, 11-15.

Brooks, B. S. (1997). Journalism in the Information Age: A Guide to Computers for Reporters and Editors. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Bunker, M. D. (1996). Have It Your Way? Public Records Laws and Computerized Government Information. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 73 (1), 90-101.

Callahan, C. (1995). The Internet As A Reporting Tool [On-line]. Available: http://ksgwww.harvard.edu/~ksgpress/umdcc.htm

Ciotta, R. (1997, August-September). Baby, You Should Drive this CAR [16 paragraphs]. American Journalism Review [On-line serial], 18. Available FTP: Hostname: newslink.org Directory: /ajrciot.html

Cline, F. (1994). Perspectives on how computers change journalism. The IRE Journal, 17 (1), 13-15.

Feola, C. J. (1993). Small Paper, Big Project. American Journalism Review, 15, 25-28.

Feola, C. J. (1994). The Nexis Nightmare. American Journalism Review 16, 39-42.

Fitzgerald, M. (1992a). Public interest journalism: Longtime editor says computers can be used to revive it. Editor & Publisher 125, 14-15.

Fitzgerald, M. (1992b). Wonked out? Journalists warned not to let their fascination with databases get out of hand; advised to still use traditional sources for news. Editor & Publisher, 125, 15, 32.

Friend, C. (1994). Daily newspaper use of computers to analyze data. The Newspaper Journal, 15 (1), 63-72.

Garcia, J. (August 28, 1997). Computer-Assisted Research [On-line]. Available: http://www.nyu.edu/pages/journalism/caj/research/body.htm

Garrison, B. (1995a). Computer-Assisted Reporting. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Garrison, B. (1995b). Newsgathering Tool Of The 1990s. Editor & Publisher, 128, 16, 123.

Garrison, B. (1995c). Online services as reporting tools: Daily newspaper use of commercial databases in 1994. Newspaper Research Journal, 16 (4), 74-86.

Garrison, B. (1995d). Trends In Computer-Assisted Reporting. Editor & Publisher, 128, 14-15, 12.

Garrison, B. (1996a). Newsroom Tools for Computer-Assisted Reporting in 1995 [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/tools96.htm

Garrison, B. (1996b). Online Services and the Internet: Computer-Assisted Reporting in Newsrooms 1995 [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/online96.htm

Garrison, B. (1997a). Computer-Assisted Reporting Project 1997 Research Questionnaire [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/quest97.htm

Garrison, B. (1997b). Computer-Assisted Reporting in Newsrooms, 1994-96 [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/chicago2.htm

Garrison, B. (1997c). Computer-Assisted Reporting Story Ideas and Project Topics in 1995-96 [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/knoxvill.htm

Garrison, B. (1997d). Online Newsgathering Trends in 1994-96 [On-line]. Available: http://www.miami.edu/com/car/stpete.htms

Grossman, Joel (1994). Locating experts via computer. The IRE Journal, 17 (1), 10-11.

Hansen, K. A., Ward, J., Conners, J. L., & Neuzil, M. (1994). Local Breaking News: Sources, Technology, and News Routines. Journalism Quarterly, 71 (3), 561-572.

Hartman, M. (1990). Investigative reporters use databases to break stories. The Quill, 78, 21-26.

Hernandez, D. G. (1996). Dealing With The FOI Crunch. Editor and Publisher, 129, 14-16, 35.

Houston, B. (1996). Computer-Assisted Reporting: A Practical Guide. New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Koch, T. (1991a). Journalism for the 21st Century: Online Information, Electronic Databases, and the News. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Koch, T. (1994). Computers vs. community: A call for bridging the gap between two camps, two tools. The Quill, 82 (4), 18-22.

Koch, T. (1996). Old News: The Necessity for Change. In The Message Is the Medium (pp. 15-33). Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Koch, T. (1997, August 27). The Reporter in the Information Age [On-line]. Available: http://www.econ.hvu.nl/~pverweij/co2.html

McIntosh, S. (1993). CAJ's dirty secrets: Don't let the hype fool you- it's hard work! The Quill, 81, 23.

Miller, A. S. (1997). CAR TALK [On-line]. Available: http://www.webcrossings.com/cartalk/html#RTFToC1

Miller, T. (1988). The data-base revolution. Columbia Journalism Review, 27, 35-38.

Moeller, P. (1995). The Ditgitized Newsroom. American Journalism Review, 17, 42-47.

Murrie, M. (1987). Information at Your Fingertips. RTNDA Communicator, 40, 36-40.

Meyer, P. (1991). The New Precision Journalism. Bloomington, IN: Indian University Press.

Outing, S. (1995, September). Report from CAR Rock [11 paragraphs]. Editor & Publisher [On-line serial], 128. Available FTP: Hostname: mediainfo.com Directory: /ephome/news/newsshtm/stop/stop27.htm

Paul, N. (1995(C.A.R. on the Beat: An introduction to information needs and where to go to fill them [On-line]. Available: http://poynter.org/car/cg_cbeat1.htm

Paul, N. (1997, August 20). Computer Assisted Journalism: The Four Rs of CAJ [On-line]. Available: http://www.poynter.org/car/cg_carfourr.htm

Poynter Institute (1995). Computer Assisted Reporting: Frequently Asked Questions [On-line]. Available: http://www.4nando.net/prof/poynter/car1.html

Poynter Institute (1997a, August 20). Computer Assisted Research: Internet [On-line]. Available: http://www.poynter.org/car/cg_carinter.htm

Poynter Institute (1997b, August 20). Uses of Online Information [On-line]. Available: http://www.poynter.org/car/cg_carvalue.htm

Prime, J. (1994). Blushing bureaucrats: Computer access fees serve as barrier and cash cow. Quill, 82, 27-29.

Rambo, C. D. (1987). Database Searches. Presstime, 19, 10-12.

Reddick, R., & King, E. (1997). Online Journalist: Using the Internet and other Electronic Resources. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace & Company.

Resnick, R. (1993, May 3). The Information Explosion. The Miami Herald, pp.20-22.

Ross, S. S., & Middleberg, D. (1996). The Media in Cyberspace III: A National Survey [On-line]. Available: http://www.mediasource.com/study/cont.htm

Schneider, A. The Downside of Wonderland. Columbia Journalism Review, 31 (6), 55-56.

Semonche, B. P. (1993). Computer-Assisted Journalism: An Overview. In News Media Libraries: A Management Handbook (pp. 265-338). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Shaw, R. (1994). Record Fees. American Journalism Review, 116, 44-46.
South, J. (August 27, 1997). Turning Data into Prose [On-line]. Available: http://www.utexas.edu/courses/j352/writing.html

Splichal, S. L. (1993). How Florida Newspapers are Dealing with Access to Computerized Government Information. Newspaper Research Journal, 13&14, (4&1), 73-83.

Steele, B., & Cochran, W. (1995). Computer-assisted reporting challenges traditional new-gathering safeguards. American Society of Newspaper Editors Bulletin 764-767, 12-16.

Weinberg, S. (1996). The Reporter's Handbook: An Investigative Guide to Documents and Techniques (3rd ed.). New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Wendland, M. (1996). Wired Journalist: Newsroom Guide to the Internet. United States: Radio and Television News Directors Association.

Whiteside, M. A. C. (1991). Computers- just another reporting tool. Editor and Publisher, 124, 1pc.

Williams, P. (1994). Database Dangers. The Quill, (july/aug94), 37-38.

Woods, D. (1994). Opening Electronic Doors. American Journalism Review, 116, 47.

Wooten, W. (August, 27, 1997). The Rolling Evidence: A Case Study of Computer-Assisted Reporting Techniques [On-line]. Available: http://jmk.su.se/dig/guide/casestudy.html

TABLE 1

Network Affiliation and Web Page Cross-Tabulation

	WEB PAGE	
NETWORK	YES	NO
ABC	21%	30%
CBS	26%	26%
NBC	33%	15%
Fox	12%	8%
Other	8%	21%
TOTAL	100%	100%

N= 191, X^2= 10.693, DF=4, p=.030

TABLE 2

Computer-Assisted Reporting Practices

	YES	NO	TOTAL
Internet	78%	22%	100%
Spreadsheets	17%	83%	100%
Database Managers	23%	77%	100%
Statistical Software	12%	88%	100%
Mapping Software	29%	71%	100%

n=194

TABLE 3

Network Affiliation and Required Newsroom Software Skills Cross-Tabulation

	MUST HAVE SKILLS	
NETWORK	**YES**	**NO**
ABC	**15%**	**10%**
CBS	**10%**	**15%**
NBC	**12%**	**17%**
Fox	**8%**	**1%**
Other	**9%**	**4%**
TOTAL	**53%**	**47%**

N=138, X^2= 12.889, DF=4, p=.012

TABLE 4

Network Affiliation and Required Word Processing Software Skills Cross-Tabulation

	MUST HAVE SKILLS	
NETWORK	YES	NO
ABC	9%	16%
CBS	9%	17%
NBC	16%	13%
Fox	5%	4%
Other	9%	2%
TOTAL	48%	52%

N= 138, X^2= 10.348, DF=4, p=.035

TABLE 5

Network Affiliation and Required Internet Skills Cross-Tabulation

	MUST HAVE SKILLS	
NETWORK	YES	NO
ABC	3%	22%
CBS	2%	23%
NBC	5%	24%
Fox	1%	8%
Other	6%	6%
TOTAL	17%	83%

N=138, X^2= 14.523, DF=4, p= .006

TABLE 6

Network Affiliation and Preferred Word Processing Software Skills

	PREFER SKILLS	
NETWORK	**YES**	**NO**
ABC	7%	17%
CBS	5%	20%
NBC	12%	17%
Fox	4%	6%
Other	8%	4%
TOTAL	36%	64%

N=138, X^2= 10.222, DF=4, p=.037

Network Television News Coverage of the Environment and the Impact of the Electronic Newsletter *Greenwire*

Paper presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division
of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
81st Annual Convention, August 5, 1998, Baltimore, MD

Claudette Guzan Artwick
Assistant Professor
Washington and Lee University
Department of Journalism and Mass Communications
Lexington, VA 24450

540-463-8865

artwick.c@wlu.edu

Network Television News Coverage of the Environment and the Impact of the Electronic Newsletter *Greenwire*

With 8,000 media organizations on the World Wide Web[1] and the availability of listserv discussion groups and e-mail communication, the Internet offers an array of resources to today's journalist. It also provides expanded avenues for news diffusion among media, and the potential to shape the national news agenda. While incipient implications for intermedia agenda setting may be germinating on the Internet, the concept itself is not new. According to McCombs,[2] research on intermedia agenda setting dates to the 1950s with studies of news flow among newspapers.[3] It encompasses subsequent studies on gatekeeping,[4] and continues into the 1990s with research on political advertising and the news agenda.[5] As we approach the 21st Century, the information flow on the Internet may help drive decisions on the issues and events traditional media choose to cover. McLuhan recognized the impact media may impose on one another when he wrote two decades ago, "No medium has its meaning or existence alone--but only in the constant interplay with other media."[6]

As fax machines revolutionized the transmission of press releases in the 1980s,[7] e-mail today affords specialized media, such as electronic newsletters, custom delivery to the desktops of newsroom staffs nationwide. Electronic newsletters abound on the Internet, and range in content from health issues to space exploration.[8] The environmental newsletter *Greenwire* is one such publication. The mission of this electronic newsletter published by the *National Journal* is to "serve as the best source for environmental news and commentary...."[9] Now in its seventh year, *Greenwire* is delivered Monday through Friday to subscribers' e-mail accounts. Among its thousands of readers[10] are producers, reporters, writers, and editors at a number of major media organizations, including CNN, ABC, and CBS.[11] *Greenwire's* clearinghouse of environmental news conveniently delivered to the desktops of news personnel offers the potential for leads and sources on environmental stories, and a means to assist gatekeepers in making news judgments on covering the environment. In other words, *Greenwire* could contribute to setting the agenda in environmental news coverage for its subscribers.

Does *Greenwire's* presence in these mainstream broadcast newsrooms play a role in setting their environmental news agenda?

Two sub-questions address this research question:

1) Do television networks that subscribe to *Greenwire* cover more environmental stories than non-subscribers?

This question intends to document the number of stories covered by subscribers and non-subscribers, suggesting a possible relationship between subscription and level of coverage.

2) Do television networks that subscribe to *Greenwire* report the same environmental stories covered in *Greenwire*, and does *Greenwire* report them first?

This question serves to explore the impact of a *Greenwire* subscription on network television news coverage of the environment.

The research questions are addressed by examining the environmental news coverage of *Greenwire* subscribers ABC, CBS, and CNN, and non-subscriber NBC news in relation to the content of *Greenwire*, through quantitative tests and qualitative observations. Interviews with news staff of these media supplement the empirical data.

The choice to analyze *Greenwire* and environmental news coverage is based on 1) the publication's use by network broadcast media; 2) *Greenwire's* established presence on the Internet; and 3) the public's interest in environmental news. According to a Roper Starch survey cited in *The American Editor*, 52 percent of Americans want more news about the environment.[12]

Method

Content Analysis. The content of *Greenwire*, ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News, CNN Prime News, and NBC Nightly News was examined for the period of April 1996 through May 1996. Prime News was selected to represent CNN's evening news coverage as its time of broadcast and length are equivalent to that of the three major networks in this study. A subscription to *Greenwire* yielded 43 issues during the sample period. (There was no publication on each of two holidays during the study.) For ABC, CBS, and NBC, the Vanderbilit University online news archive yielded for analysis 45 newscasts for each network. As CNN Prime News was not available on the Vanderbilt archive, it was videotaped off cable to yield 44 newscasts (one was not taped due to a technical error).

This approach to sampling was used to examine *Greenwire's* coverage of environmental issues over time in comparison to network coverage of the environment. While a random or stratified sample of newscasts would decrease the possibility of sampling error, those methods would minimize the opportunities for observing coverage of environmental issues over a particular period of time. Monday through Friday broadcasts were selected because *Greenwire* publishes on those days.

The coding unit was the story. First, stories in each medium were simply counted to calculate total number of stories. Each individual story was counted, taking care to include separate stories grouped under one heading by Vanderbilt. To address the first research question and determine if *Greenwire* subscribers covered more environmental stories than the non-subscriber, each medium was coded for total *environmental* stories. An environmental story was defined as "dealing with humanity's influence, whether positive or negative, on the environment," from Ader's work on agenda setting and environmental pollution.[13] Environmental stories in the broadcast media were identified by reading story descriptions in the Vanderbilt archive, or in the case of CNN Prime News, by watching anchor introductions to broadcast news stories. All *Greenwire* stories were coded as environmental news, with the exception of briefs, kickers, and media monitors, which were excluded from analysis.

Environmental stories were further coded into topic categories by reading the Vanderbilt story descriptions, watching the CNN stories, and reading the first paragraph of *Greenwire* stories . These categories were also guided by Ader,[14] whose research identified waste disposal, air quality, and water quality as salient environmental topics. The breadth of stories in these media demanded an extended list of topic categories, which was developed by coding ten issues of *Greenwire* prior to the study period. This resulted in the following ten environmental topic categories: waste disposal, air quality, water quality, environmental movement, global issues, alternative energy, industry, wildlife/natural resources, health, and government/politics. See Appendix I for a description of each category.

Each environmental story was coded into only one of the above categories, which was determined by the major focus of the piece. Coding was performed by an undergraduate student and the author. A reliability check on 20 percent of stories yielded a 94 percent agreement.

The next step was taken to determine if *Greenwire* subscribers reported environmental stories after they were published in the newsletter. A possible agenda-setting influence would be indicated if subscribers covered stories that first appeared in *Greenwire*.

Prominence and frequency of *Greenwire's* coverage guided this procedure. Greenwire leads each issue with a "Spotlight Story," which might be considered comparable to the lead story in television news, or the above-the-fold story in a newspaper. The 43 "Spotlight Stories" from the sample period were searched for in the environmental stories covered by the television networks, and compared by date.

Frequently covered topics were also selected for analysis. Stories on the same topic appearing in *Greenwire* more than five times were noted and searched for in the networks' coverage. These, too, were compared by date. In addition, all environmental stories covered by the networks were also searched for in *Greenwire* , noting dates broadcast and published.

Telephone Interviews. The author conducted telephone interviews and corresponded via e-mail with network television reporters and producers, and with the publisher of *Greenwire*. The interviews focused on environmental news coverage in general, with specific attention to stories covered during the research sample period. Questions also dealt with sources of environmental news and research resources, in order to draw out information about potential reliance on *Greenwire*.

Results

Greenwire published a total of 786 stories during April and May of 1996. The networks broadcast the following numbers of stories in their evening newscasts during that period: CNN - 697, ABC - 588, CBS - 556, and NBC - 542.

All 786 *Greenwire* stories were coded as environmental news. The networks covered the following numbers of environmental stories: CNN - 17, ABC - 16, CBS - 11, and NBC - 11.

Do television networks that subscribe to *Greenwire* cover more environmental stories than non-subscribers?

The mean number of stories per newscast for CNN and ABC (*Greenwire* subscribers) was slightly higher than for non-subscriber NBC (see Table 1). However, a one-way ANOVA showed no significant difference among the average number of environmental stories included in each network newscast.

Table 1
Environmental Stories per Newscast

Network	N	Mean
CNN	44	.39
ABC	45	.36
CBS	45	.24
NBC	45	.24

Do television networks that subscribe to *Greenwire* report the same environmental stories covered in *Greenwire*, and does *Greenwire* report them first?

The network television news programs covered eight of the 43 *Greenwire* "Spotlight Stories." Two stories, one on environmental riders to the federal budget and another on the ozone layer, were broadcast the same day *Greenwire* covered them, indicating a possible agenda-setting influence. NBC, the non-subscriber, excluded the environmental riders from its budget story, while subscribers included the riders, as highlighted in *Greenwire*. Subscriber CBS and non-subscriber NBC both covered the ozone story.

A number of stories other than those spotlighted were published in

Greenwire prior to being broadcast on the networks. Two were major events--Earth Day, and the Chernobyl ten-year anniversary--and were carried by all four networks. Only subscribers reported on drinking water pollution and the fuel additive MMT, while non-subscriber NBC reported on U.S. national parks.

Overall, the environmental news category that *Greenwire* emphasized most heavily received little coverage by the networks, regardless of whether they were *Greenwire* subscribers. Twenty-three percent of *Greenwire* stories focused on politics/government and the environment, while only nine percent of network stories had that focus. Instead, the networks most often covered stories about wildlife and natural resources. However, the subscribers covered fewer stories on this topic than did the non-subscriber. A little under a third of ABC, CNN, and CBS stories on the environment focused on this category, which compares more favorably to *Greenwire's* 19 percent than NBC, who devoted nearly half of its environmental coverage to stories about wildlife and natural resources.

Some general categories of *Greenwire* stories were covered by subscribers but not by the non-subscriber. For example, NBC covered no stories on waste or the environmental movement. See the coverage breakdown in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Environmental Story Coverage by Medium (# of stories and % of total)

Network	Waste	Air	Water	Movemt.	Global	Alt. Energy	Industry	Wildlife Nat. Res.	Health	Govmt.	Total Stories
CNN	1/6%		3/18%	2/12%		3/18%		5/29%	1/6%	2/12%	17
ABC	1/6%		1/6%		1/6%	4/25%		6/38%	2/12%	1/6%	16
CBS	1/9%			2/18%		3/27%		3/27%		1/9%	11
NBC			1/9%		1/9%	2/18%		5/45%	1/9%	1/9%	11
G-wire	67/9%	54/7%	75/10%	21/3%	69/9%	56/7%	81/10%	146/19%	37/5%	180/23%	786

Discussion

This study set out to examine the role of the electronic newsletter *Greenwire* in setting the environmental agenda for network television news. Findings exhibit subtle differences in environmental news coverage between television networks that subscribe to *Greenwire* and the network that did not subscribe. Subscribers broadcast several stories covered in *Greenwire* that the non-subscriber excluded from its newscasts, suggesting similarities in news judgment between *Greenwire* and its subscribers. Also, subscribers covered more environmental news than the non-subscriber, although the difference was not statistically significant. Taken together, ABC, CBS, and CNN included a story on the environment in one-third of their newscasts during the study period, while NBC did so in about a fourth of its programs during the same period. The greater coverage suggests a relationship between the *Greenwire* subscription and a commitment to environmental news.

The network covering the greatest number of environmental stories in this research was CNN, and during the study period its environmental producer made regular use of *Greenwire.* Peter Dykstra, senior producer of CNN's environmental unit at the time of this research, said he has used *Greenwire* to alert him of local stories that may have national importance. But more often, says Dykstra, he uses *Greenwire* as an insurance policy, "It's bad to miss something. The single best source of guarantee are *Greenwire* items." But it's not the only source. CNN's environmental unit receives 200 correspondences a day from parties pitching story ideas, including congressional offices, industry or environmental groups, PR firms, and citizens.[15]

And not all CNN staffers who cover the environment use the electronic newsletter. When reporter Kathleen Koch, who did a story on particle pollution during this study, was asked about using *Greenwire* as a source, she replied, "I've never heard of it."[16] Koch is not assigned to the environmental beat. As a part-time reporter she says she fills in the gaps, "Generally they put me on something because they've gotten a press release."[17] Koch's particle pollution story grew out of a mayor's news conference, event-driven coverage that characterizes much of television news.

Events appear to have driven much of the television network environmental news coverage during this study. Nearly seven out of ten stories were clearly event-driven, including Earth Day celebrations, nuclear waste protests, book releases, photo exibits, and government announcements. The event that attracted the greatest coverage during this study was the ten-year anniversary of the Chernobyl nuclear accident, accounting for nearly one-fourth of stories the networks broadcast on the environment. And while *Greenwire* reported on Chernobyl, the topic contributed to less than seven percent of its stories.

Instead, *Greenwire* focused most heavily on government/politics. That emphasis reflects its mission, which includes keeping readers "...in the loop on the full range of crucial policy and business issues...."[18] While *Greenwire* devoted 23 percent of its stories to political issues, fewer than one in ten network stories focused on these issues. However, *Greenwire* subscribers included an environmental aspect in their national budget stories, reflecting *Greenwire's* story framing. NBC excluded that focus from its budget coverage. *Greenwire* may have highlighted the issue's salience to its network subscribers.

A story about MMT, a fuel additive that may pose health threats was broadcast on ABC nearly a week after it appeared in *Greenwire,* indicating that *Greenwire* might have contributed to ABC's coverage of the story. But in this case the electronic newsletter did not set the agenda for ABC News. According to the story's reporter, Ned Potter, an environmental group alerted ABC to the story. ABC decided to watch the issue, and when Ethyl Corporation, the producer of MMT, bought ads in 19 newspapers, ABC reported the story. Potter says he still reads *Greenwire* even though his purview has changed, "I find it tremendously valuable in keeping me up-to-date on issues I'm too busy to follow, and for getting a feel for what's on the overall plate out there."[19]

There are several areas in which *Greenwire* could have set the agenda for the networks but did not. *Greenwire* spolighted logging and the timber industry twice, and reported on it at least 15 times during the study period. But the story was not touched by the networks. Climate change was also spotlighted and covered repeatedly by *Greenwire*, but was absent from network reporting.

In conclusion, this study found subtle differences in environmental coverage between the television networks that subscribe to the e-mail environmental newsletter *Greenwire* and the non-subscribing network. Those differences suggest that *Greenwire* plays an indirect agenda-setting role for its subscribers, in the form of a mechanism to alert them of environmental issues. The newsletter appears to serve its subscribers as an "insurance policy" to protect against missing something--events or issues brewing on the local level that may be relevant nationally. This may be due to the nature of the newsletter itself. *Greenwire* gathers news on the environment from 200 sources, culls what it considers to be most relevant to its readers, and then rewrites the coverage resulting in about 20-25 stories per issue. Rather than enterprise environmental stories, *Greenwire* "covers the coverage."[20] And while this approach may alert networks to potential stories, it doesn't appear to drive their environmental coverage.

Instead, events drive what television network news reports on the environment. According to one environmentalist, "Nothing happens unless someone pushes for it."[21] While *Greenwire* serves as a valuable resource to network television news staff, it highlights the environmental news agenda rather than sets it.

Appendix I
Environmental News Categories

Environmental stories were coded into the following categories based on their major focus. When stories spanned several categories, the larger, overarching theme dominated. For example, some reports on Chernobyl included water pollution, wildlife, and health issues. Those stories were assessed as nuclear power and coded into the alternative energy category.

Waste disposal: The discarding of household, industry, or military refuse.

Air quality: The condition of indoor and outdoor air.

Water quality: The condition of various bodies of water, such as streams, lakes, and oceans, in terms of a healthy ecosystem as well as a source of drinking water.

Environmental movement: Stories focusing on environmental groups and their activities.

Global issues: Large-scale issues such as global warming, ozone depletion, and deforestation.

Alternative energy: The development and use of forms of energy other than fossil fuels.

Industry: The relationship of the production of material goods and the environment.

Wildlife/natural resources: Wild animals and their habitats.

Health: Impact of the environment on human health.

Government/politics: Government's relation to the environment, including politicians and their activities.

References

1 . AJR Newslink, www.newslink.org.

2 . Maxwell E. McCombs,"Explorers and Surveyors: Expanding Strategies for Agenda-Setting Research, *Journalism Quarterly* 69 (winter 1992):813-824.

3 . Warren Breed, "Newspaper Opinion Leaders and the Process of Standardization," *Journalism Quarterly* 32 (1955):277-284, 328.

4 . D. Charles Whitney and Lee Becker, "'Keeping the Gates' for Gatekeepers: The Effects of Wire News," *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Spring 1982):60-65.

5 . Marilyn Roberts and Maxwell McCombs, "Agenda Setting and Political Advertising: Origins of the News Agenda," *Political Communication 11* (July-September 1994):249-262.

6 . Quoted in Mark Fitzgerald, "The Effect of the Internet on Print Journalism," *Editor & Publisher* 129 (April 13, 1996):72-75.

7 . Tim K. Wulfemeyer and Lowell Frazier, "The Ethics of Video News Releases: A Qualitative Analysis," *Journal of Mass Media Ethics* 7 (Number 3, 1992).

8 . Daniel Akst, "To Cut Through the Clutter, Subscribe to an Internet Newsletter," *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1994, sec. D, p. 8, col. 1.

9 . Dale Curtis, publisher of *Greenwire*, e-mail communication, March 12, 1997.

10 . Dale Curtis, publisher of *Greenwire*, telephone interview March 4, 1997.

11 . Eric Konigsberg, "Daily Paperless," *Los Angeles Times*, April 29, 1994, Sec. D, p. 1, col. 2.

12 . Emilia Askari, "Readers Thirst for More About Their Environment," *American Editor* number 771:14 (October 1995).

13 . Christine R. Ader, "A Longitudinal Study of Agenda Setting for the Issue of Environmental Pollution," *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 72 (Summer 1995):303.

14 . Ader, "A Longitudinal Study."

15 . Peter Dykstra, senior CNN environmental producer, telephone interview August 6, 1996.

16 . Kathleen Koch, reporter, CNN Washington, telephone interview August 7, 1996.

17 . Koch, telephone interview.

18. Curtis, e-mail.

19. Ned Potter, reporter, ABC News, telephone interview, March 17, 1998.

20. Curtis, e-mail.

21. James J. MacKenzie, senior associate, World Resources Institute, lecture, March 25, 1998.

MANAGING SINGLE-MARKET RADIO CLUSTERS

Presented at
the annual 1998 AEJMC Convention

by
Greg Stefaniak, Ph.D.
Radio, Television and Film Department
University of Arkansas at Little Rock
2801 S. University Ave.
Little Rock, Arkansas 72204-1099
August 1998

Telephone: 501-569-3164
E-mail: gxstefaniak@ualr.edu

MANAGING SINGLE-MARKET RADIO CLUSTERS

ABSTRACT

This study indicated that managing a cluster of radio stations is very different from managing a single radio station. Cluster managers have a greater need and use of a wide variety of skills, attributes and information. The study suggested that this new and very different group of managers could be helped by the establishment of special workshops, seminars, literature, and organizational support systems.

MANAGING SINGLE-MARKET RADIO CLUSTERS

The radio industry has been consolidating since ownership limits were lifted by the Telecommunications Act of 1996.[1] Once ownership was limited to two radio stations in a single market. Now, a person or company may own up to eight radio stations in a market.[2]

The pace of consolidation has been more dramatic than anticipated.[3] Since the passage of the 1996 Act, over 4,000 radio stations have changed hands[4] and over 1,000 radio mergers have occurred.[5]

The dynamics of the radio industry has changed.[6] Management issues are now at the forefront of industry's thinking.[7]

In the fall of 1997, 344 general managers, who once managed one or two radio stations, were now managing three or more stations in a market.[8] Good leadership is needed from a general manager if a radio cluster is going to do well.[9]

This study examines the perceptions of radio cluster general managers regarding what differences may exist between managing one radio station and a cluster of radio stations and, in so doing, presents a picture of what skills and other issues present and future managers may need to consider to be effective radio cluster general managers.[10]

Methodology

In the summer and early fall of 1997 telephone interviews were conducted with radio cluster general managers and cluster CEOs. Based on these conversations, a series of questionnaires were developed and pre-tested.[11]

In October 1997, questionnaires were mailed to the 344 radio clusters in the United States. The mailings included a questionnaire for the cluster general managers and questionnaires for mid-level managers. The questionnaires contained a comprehensive series of open-ended management structure questions; a comprehensive series of open-ended manager history, experience and observation questions; and a section for additional comments.

A second questionnaire was developed and mailed to non-responding clusters in November 1997. The November mailing contained a shorter version of the October questionnaire and only cluster general managers were asked to respond to the questionnaire.

A third questionnaire was developed after reviewing the October and November responses. This questionnaire was mailed to all 344 cluster general managers in January 1998.

The January questionnaire contained statements regarding potential differences between managing a single radio station and managing a cluster of radio stations and the need cluster managers may have for additional information regarding other clusters' organizational layouts and management techniques. The respondents were asked to circle on a scale of one to five whether they agreed or disagreed, strongly or otherwise, with the statements. The respondents were also asked to give any additional comments they may have regarding the managing of radio clusters. Completed instruments were returned by 115 (or 33%) of the 344 managers.

Findings

Table 1 illustrates that the radio cluster general managers had very strong opinions regarding the vast majority of statements listed in the January questionnaire. In fact, on a scale of 5 ("strongly agree") to 1 ("strongly disagree"), thirteen of the seventeen questionnaire statements received mean scores of four or better and only one of the seventeen statements received a mean score of less than three.

Table1. Radio Cluster General Managers

Statements	Mean Scores[a]	Strongly Agree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Greater Use and Need Skills Statements			
Delegation Skills	4.7	77	1
Time Management Skills	4.7	75	1
All Organizational Skills	4.5	61	2
Culture Development Skills	4.3	50	2
Conflict Management Skills	4.1	45	2
Budget Skills	4.1	45	1
Hiring Skills	4.1	41	1
Training Skills	4.0	35	1
Greater Need To Statements			
Accept and Deal with Change	4.6	70	1
Be Focused	4.4	61	1
Be Flexible	4.2	46	1
Have Clear Cut Standards	4.0	34	2
General Management Statements			
Important to Learn Different Cluster Org. Layouts and Management Techniques	4.0	33	1
More a businessperson than broadcaster	3.8	32	1
More a generalist than specialist	3.7	27	3

(Table 1 continued on next page.)

Table1---Continued

Statements	Mean Scores[a]	Strongly Agree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Less Need To Be Involved In Statements			
Station Day-to-Day Details	3.5	20	7
Community Activities	2.5	9	18

[a]Mean scores are on a scale of 5 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Greater Use and Need Skills Statements

The cluster general managers indicated that there is a greater need and use of all the skills listed in Table 1. Of special note was the large percentage of managers who "strongly agreed" that there is a greater need and use of delegation and time management skills. Over 77% of the managers "strongly agreed" that there was a greater need and use of delegation skills and 75% of the managers "strongly agreed" that there was a greater need and use of time management skills.

Also of note was the very small percentage of managers who "strongly disagreed" that there was a greater need and use of these skills. Only 1% of the managers "strongly disagreed" with five of the eight skills statements and only 2% of the managers "strongly disagreed" with the three remaining skills statements.

Greater Need to Statements

The general managers also indicated that there was a greater need to accept and deal with change, to be focused, to be flexible, and to have clear cut standards. Of special note was the fact that 70% of the managers "strongly agreed" that there is a greater need to accept and deal with change.

Also of note was the very small percentage of cluster managers who "strongly disagreed" with these statements. Only 1% of the managers "strongly disagreed" with three of the "need to" statements and only 2% of the managers "strongly disagreed" with the remaining "need to" statement.

General Management Statements

The general managers basically agreed with the three general management statements listed in Table 1. The managers agreed that it would be important to learn different cluster organizational layouts and management techniques, that managing a cluster is more like being a businessperson than a broadcaster, and that managing a cluster requires a manager to be more of a generalist than a specialist.

It should be noted that the "general management" statement mean scores are either equal to or lower than the mean scores for the "skills" and "need to" statements and the general management "strongly agreed" percentages were lower than the "skills" and "need to" percentages. However, of note is the fact that there were very few cluster managers who "strongly disagreed" with the general management statements. Only 1% of the managers "strongly disagreed" that it was important to learn different cluster organizational layouts and management techniques, only 1% of the managers "strongly disagreed" that being a cluster manager was more like being a businessperson than a broadcaster, and only 3% of the managers "strongly disagreed" that they were required to be more of a generalist than a specialist.

Less Need Statements

The managers were relatively neutral regarding the need to be less involved in station day-to-day details and community activities. Both statements received the lowest mean scores as well as the lowest percentages of "strongly agreed" responses.

Discussion

The cluster general managers' responses to the statements and their additional comments generate several themes. The first is that managing a cluster of radio stations is very different from managing a single radio station.

This view is supported by the shear weight of the mean scores, the high percentage of "strongly agree" responses and the corresponding low percentage of "strongly disagree" responses to the "skills", "need to" and "general management" statements. Cluster managers consistently indicated that they either had "a greater need and use of", "a greater need to be" or "a greater need to accept" the skills and other issues listed in Table 1.

Even statements which received relatively low scores support this theme, including the statement which addresses whether "(b)eing a cluster manager is more like being a 'businessperson' than it is like being a 'broadcaster'." Almost one-third, or 32%, of the cluster managers "strongly agreed" with the statement and only 1% of the managers "strongly disagreed" with the statement.

Additional comments from cluster managers, and analysts who reviewed Table 1 data, also support the view that managing a cluster is very different from managing a single station.

One analyst, who is also a cluster manager, wrote that he was surprised that the businessperson/broadcaster "strongly agreed" figures were not higher. As he put it: "Even my son says I seem more businesslike now."[12]

A second analyst, who is a media consultant and a former radio station owner and manager, upon review of the businessperson/ broadcaster and other statements, simply stated: "The industry has truly changed."[13] As one present cluster manager wrote: "Asking the question 'How can we?' comes up more often than it used to. 'We used to' never comes up anymore."[14]

A corollary theme that was generated from this study is that some cluster managers may need help. Again, the shear weight of the numbers in Table 1 supports this view. And, again, this view is supported by comments from cluster managers and analysts.[15]

As one manager simply wrote:

> High-level managers need help. We are given less direction than anyone in consolidation, yet are most responsible for the outcome and ultimate success or failure of the industry. Stress and frustration are high . . . we have huge responsibilities and the 'crisis management' style reigns.[16]

A third theme that was generated by this study primarily comes from comments submitted by general managers. The emergence of radio clusters and, thus, the need to develop cluster management principles and practices, has been dramatic. Managers have had to learn as they go[17] and, with such little time to do anything else,[18] it appears that some managers may feel isolated and some may have feel that their owners are not fully aware of the impact that clustering has had on them and others.

As one cluster manager wrote:

> (W)e have few or no peers . . .. (What is needed is) (e)ducation and most importantly acknowledgement by ownership that this problem needs to be addressed . . ..[19]

This cluster manager goes on to write that good managers will be lost if something is not done now.[20] In fact, one cluster manager did write that he was going to leave his position.[21]

Recommendations

One cluster manager writes that what his fellow managers need to do is to "(a)sk for the tools . . . to get things done."[22] This study suggests that there are two sets of tools that may be helpful to present and future radio cluster managers. Those two sets of tools are 1) workshops and seminars and 2) support systems.

Workshops and Seminars

The study suggests that workshops and seminars on the "skills", "need to" and "general management" issues listed in Table 1 may be one set of tools managers may wish to ask for.

Two of these issues call for additional discussions at this time. The first issue involves culture development and the second involves time management.

Culture Management

Effective culture development involves combining groups from different work environments into one "healthy" environment.[23] Culture development, unlike time management, is a new skills area for most radio cluster managers.

It is not an easy task to develop one healthy culture out of many.[24] However, culture management is basic to cluster management. Also, a manager's ability to develop a new and heathy work environment will directly impact the other "skills", "need to" and "general management" issues listed in Table 1. Thus, special consideration needs be made of the knowledge and skill needs in the area of culture development.

Time Management

Time management is not a new issue for radio managers.[25] However, this study suggests that some managers may wish to rethink their management decisions regarding two time-impact areas.

Managing many day-to-day details and being involved in community activities are two traditional roles of radio managers.[26] However, these roles can be very time consuming. Also, these roles can be delegated to middle managers.

What the study suggests is that some managers may be, to some extent, holding onto traditional ways of dealing with these two roles even though they have less time to be involved in all matters, including daily station details and community activities.

One analyst noted that what cluster managers need to do is to "(f)ocus on empowering and developing 'middle managers'."[27] This study suggests that one way a cluster general manager can increase and strengthen healthy delegation patterns and a healthy delegation environment and, at the same time, save time is by delegating more day-to-day and community activities to their middle managers.

Support Systems

This study indicates that managing a radio cluster is a new thing and is very different from managing a single station. The study also indicates that there are cluster managers who want to know more about each other, to know their peers. Thus, the study suggests that cluster managers could benefit from a support system or network which would allow them to share their experiences, questions and ideas.

Such a support system could involve a variety of elements. For example, cluster managers could ask the traditional trade publications for special sections on cluster management issues and needs. Cluster managers could also ask the traditional media organizations and associations to systematically consider their literature, seminar and organizational needs, including the development of an on-going cluster management newsletter and on-going special interest groups or divisions for cluster managers.

Summary and Conclusions

This study indicated that managing a radio cluster is very different from managing a single radio station. Cluster managers have a greater need and use of delegation, time, cultural development, conflict, budget, hiring and training management skills. They also have a greater need to deal with and to accept change, to be focused, to be flexible and to use clear cut standards. In fact, a greater use and need of all organizational skills was indicated by the managers.

The study suggested that many cluster managers may be helped by workshops and seminars which address these greater use and need issues, and especially workshops and seminars that deal with the relatively new skill area called culture development. The study also suggested that on-going literature on cluster management and on-going organizational support systems for cluster managers could help meet the needs of this new and very different group of managers.

Change is a constant. Often, the only choice people have is how they choose to deal with change.

The radio industry has dramatically changed over the past two years. It appears that the radio industry will continue to change because of additional consolidations[28] and other factors that are pressing the industry.[29]

This study indicated that cluster radio managers and their owners have very doable choices which can help them better manage this new and evolving radio structure. These very doable choices are education and networking.

What this study also suggested is that managers and owners alike may want to rethink what is being asked of themselves and others; including rethinking the organizational structures of their clusters as well as the roles and responsibilities of cluster managers.

What we may have before us is a new and distinct type of manager ---the cluster manager. Further study is needed to better understand this new management type. Additional study will help all concerned parties do more effective jobs; be they present and future cluster managers, present and future cluster owners, present and future cluster workers, media consultants or media educators.

Endnotes

[1] Telecommunications Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56 (to be codified in scattered sections of 47 U.S.C.)

[2] *E.g.*, Steve Knoll, "Radio Station Consolidation: Good News for Owners, but What About Listeners?," *New York Times*, 30 December 1996, Late New York Edition, 5D.

[3] *E.g.*, This observation has been made by various people including FCC Chairman William Kennard. Chairman Kennard's comment is reported in John R. Wilke, "U.S. Files Suit to Bar Radio Merger As Consolidation Appears to Hit Crest," *Wall Street Journal*, 7 November 1997, Eastern Edition, 8B.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Claude Brodesser, "Consolidation: When Does the Dealing End?," *Mediaweek*, 15 September 1997, 24-25.

[6] *E.g.*, The effect of consolidation on the dynamics of markets was predicted in 1993 and was reported in "Radio: Preparing for Consolidation," *Broadcasting*, 4 January 1993, 14.

[7] *E.g.*. Donna Petrozzello, "Radio Consolidation On Minds of New York Broadcasters," *Broadcasting & Cable*, 22 July 1996, 33.

[8] In a facsimile dated 24 September 1997, Debbie Metcalf, Vice President, BIA Research Inc., Chantilly Va., indicated that there were 344 general managers who were managing three or more radio stations. A list of the managers was given to the author as a grant-in-aid by BIA.

[9] *E.g.*. Donna Petrozzello, "Sales, Personnel New Challenges of Consolidation," *Broadcasting & Cable*, 14 October 1996, 46.

[10] This study was funded by a National Association of Broadcasters 1997 Grant for Research in Broadcasting.

[11] Two consultants worked extensively with the author on this project. The first consultant is Wally Tucker of MGMT Services Inc., Jacksonville, Arkansas. A former radio owner and general manager, Tucker is presently a media consultant and broker who specializes in the radio industry. The second consultant is Doris Krain of Little Rock, Arkansas. Krain is an organization communications consultant who specializes in culture development.

[12] The analyst is Jay Werth, Vice President/General Manager, Chancellor Media Corporation, Sacramento, California. The cited comments were in a facsimile to the author dated 23 February 1998.

[13] Wally Tucker, telephone conversation with author, 18 February 1998.

[14] Cluster Manager #335, additional comment, 1 October 1997 questionnaire.

[15] Wally Tucker, in his 18 February 1998 telephone conversation, and Cluster Manager #16, in additional comments to the 1 October 1997 questionnaire, were adamant about this point.

[16] Cluster Manager #16.

[17] Cluster Manager #335.

[18] The lack of managers' time was a major consideration in most of the fall 1997 as well as January 1998 questionnaire responses. The January questionnaire's 33% return rate may be due, in part, to the cluster managers' time restraints. As cluster manager #336 wrote in his 3 November 1997 questionnaire: "Between 3 boards and 4 radio stations I don't have the time to participate in this."

[19] Cluster Manager #335.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Cluster Manager #107, additional comment, 28 January 1998 questionnaire.

[22] Cluster Manager #221, additional comment, 1 October 1997 questionnaire.

[23] *E.g.*, "This process of give-and-take and adjustment is called acculturation." Four general methods of acculturation, or culture development, are outlined in Ali R. Malekzadeh and Afsaneh Nahavandi, "Making Mergers Work by Managing Cultures," *Journal of Business Strategy* 11 (1990): 55-57.

[24] *E.g.*, The "painful lesson" of combining cultures is outlined and suggestions for those combining cultures are given in Joann S. Lublin and Bridget O'Brian, "When Disparate Firms Merge, Cultures Often Collide," *Wall Street Journal*, 14 February 1997, Eastern Edition, A9A.

[25] *E.g.*, P. K. Pringle, M.F. Starr and W.E. McCavitt, *Electronic Media Management*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Focal Press, 1995), 20-21.

[26] *E.g.*, A general overview of the broad day-to-day involvements of general managers can be seen in ibid., 26. A list of public relations/ community activities that traditionally involves general managers is listed in ibid., 210-211.

[27] Werth, 23 February 1998.

[28] Peter Bowan, vice president of BIA Consulting, indicated in the fall of 1997 that his best guess was that consolidation would be ending in "two or three years on the outside." This comment was reported in Paul D. Colford, "Consolidation Puts a Mega-Hurt on Indies," *Adweek* (Eastern Edition), 8 September 1997, 22.

[29] *E.g.*, One pressing industry issue is government regulation. Of special importance is the government's possible rethinking of the radio industry's public interest responsibilities. This concern is outlined in John Merli, "Radio Next for Public Interest Scrutiny?," *Broadcasting & Cable*, 10 November 1997, 56-57.

Running Head: The Youformation Story

A content analysis of *Dateline NBC* and *NBC Nightly News*: The infiltration of the youformation story into news magazines and mainstream news.

Jeff Demas

Ohio University

406 Jeannine St.
Ironton, OH 45638
(740)533-4662
jmdemas@wwd.net

Abstract

Recent criticism of "mainstream" news includes charges that the lines between it and "magazine-style" programs have become more blurred. Critics say that mainstream news includes more tabloid-style reporting and celebrity news than hard news. Through content analysis of *NBC Nightly News* and *Dateline NBC*, this study researches those charges. The study also researches a particular genre of "Could this happen to you?" type stories, called youformation by the researcher. Results indicate that from 1992 to 1997, *Nightly News* content begins to look more like *Dateline*, and not vice versa. There is also a significant increase in "youformation" stories.

Introduction

In the 1980's, television experienced a shift from the preponderance of sitcoms and dramas which pervaded prime time television. Programmers began to experiment with news magazines in prime time, based on the success and longevity of *CBS's 60 Minutes*. While there have been several failures, a few, such as *20 20*, *Prime Time Live* and *Dateline*, survived. In fact, *Dateline* has flourished and now airs four or five times a week on a regular basis.

News magazines were not the only change in the flavor of prime time. An entire genre of reality-based programs began to appear, from "home video" news and contests to "tabloid" journals. The successes and failures of these types of programs need to be explored. As the popularity of reality-based shows continues to increase, it is likely that these will be the subjects of an increasing number of studies.

The popularity of these programs among producers is not surprising. They are generally less expensive to produce than a one-hour prime time drama, and news magazines are capable of garnering high ratings. *60 Minutes* has rated among the top-ten network programs for most of the last quarter century.

The success of news magazines does not necessarily mean, however, that television audiences are thirsting for more hard news. In fact much of the content is features and celebrity profiles. Producers also use promotional tools to lure audiences into watching.

In their teasers (short promotional announcements identifying the stories on the upcoming episodes), the anchor will often personalize the story for the viewer. While some stories lend themselves to such personalization because they affect large segments of the viewing population, others are isolated events that make news because of their unusual human interest coefficient. The teaser will incorporate a phrase such as "Could this happen to you?" or "Is this going on in your neighborhood?" to pique the interest of the viewer.

Such a technique for involving viewers is not uncommon among news directors. Reporters and anchors are taught both in the classroom and on the job to localize and personalize stories whenever possible. However, the use of this technique to "scare" the viewer into watching a particular story crosses the boundaries of accurate reporting and can border on sensationalism, especially if the actual story involves only an isolated incident. It can also fuel the research by George Gerbner (1976, 1983) and others, which claims that heavy television viewing can lead to a viewer's perception of the world as a scary place to live. Although Gerbner's studies dealt mostly with violence and fictionalized violence, one may assume that those whose paranoia is fed by violence also may be more easily swayed by the threat of diseases or other social ills.

This study will attempt to analyze how often this type of "youformation" story appears, and whether it is more prevalent in prime time news magazines than evening network newscasts. The study will also examine whether the use of this tactic has seeped into mainstream newscasts over time, and whether other techniques are present that represent a dramatizing or sensationalizing of the news.

In random analyzation of the content of news programming in recent years, the researcher began to notice certain schemata that producers employ, possibly to attract viewer attention, that were not used several years ago. Among these was an increasing exploitation of victims, through teary-eyed interviews and photos of deceased victims. Victimization is a technique often employed by tabloid-style news magazines such as *Inside Edition* and *Hard Copy* to add entertainment value to news content (Ehrlich, 1996). This study, then, will examine two hypotheses:

> H_1 *NBC Nightly News* used more tabloid-style tactics such as victimization and photos of the dead in 1997 than in 1992.
>
> H_2 *NBC Nightly News* content employed techniques to look more like its magazine counterpart *Dateline* than vice-versa from 1992 to 1997.

The reason for choosing these two years will be discussed later.

Literature Review

Tabloid-style television news is no longer a novel idea. Neither is criticizing the "tabloids." In fact, since *A Current Affair* piloted the genre of syndicated news magazines in 1986, such programs have come under fire for sensationalism, appealing to prurient interests, and masking human oddities under the guise of news.

What is new is that critics are now beginning to compare some "mainstream" news programs to the tabloids. In fact, Frank Houston, assistant editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review* (1996), has said " the distinction in the eyes of the viewer between tabloid and mainstream is largely illusory...." Correspondent Christopher Hanson of the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* asserted that criticizing the tabloids for sensational coverage has become a way for mainstream news programs to exploit lurid stories themselves. Hanson said "[t]he beauty is that these forums can be used simultaneously to deplore sensationalism and indulge in it."(*Columbia Journalism Review*, 1994) Joshua Gamson, assistant professor of sociology at Yale University said that "critics often help hide the fact that there is only a thin line between commercial news and commercial entertainment." (*Current*, 1995)

Although the criticism of mainstream television news has become abundant, there has been very little quantitative evidence to support the arguments. One of those studies, by Rarick and Lind (1991), found that 85% of viewers believe that television "newscasts too often emphasize dramatic visual or sensational stories at the expense of news about important issues." However, their study was an audience survey, not a measure of the actual output of sensationalism, and contained mostly qualitative interpretations.

Moore (1984) conducted a similar survey, but among scientists who were featured in science-related stories. Scientists complained that news reporters used superfluous wording such as "breakthrough" to give added notoriety to limited scientific achievements. One scientist said the reporters were "more interested in catch phrases than in dealing with complex concepts."

Cremedas and Chew (1994) explored the influence of tabloid-style news on viewer recall, and found that entertainment value added to the viewer's story retention. However, they did not measure the amount of sensational or infotainment content in the newscasts. Wilkinson and Fletcher (1995) demonstrated that increases in the amount of blood shown in a news story had an adverse effect on viewers, and was linked to the mean-world syndrome. In other words, viewers who watched the stories containing more blood had a tendency to view the world as inherently violent.

At least two studies have offered quantitative information with respect to television news sensationalism, but one involved only local news and the other dealt with only crime stories. Slattery and Hakanen (1994) replicated a 1978 content analysis of newscasts in Pennsylvania. They found that the amount of sensational and human interest stories increased in that 16-year period. Grabe (1996) compared the coverage of crime stories between tabloid and traditional newscasts. Results indicated that the tabloid-style shows are more likely to feature crime stories than traditional news programs. The study also found that tabloids are more likely to present criminals from middle or upper classes, while traditional news reported more often on criminals in the working class.

In a recent Master's thesis, Teenor (1996) explored the possibility that audiences can no longer distinguish between traditional newscasts and tabloid television. Through observations of focus groups, Teenor found that there was no genre-blurring and in most cases audiences could tell the difference. What that study did not demonstrate, though, was whether mainstream newscasts have increased their use of tabloid techniques over time. The fact that audiences recognized mainstream news does not necessarily mean that mainstream news does not contain tabloid-style reporting.

Another Master's thesis analyzed the content of a prime time news magazine (Rauch, 1993), but the study was looking for bias. Results indicated that *PrimeTime Live*, the subject of the study, did contain bias in its investigation of three television ministries in 1991. The study reported that the stories lacked both objectivity and balance.

None of these studies focused on the use of particular techniques associated with tabloid journalism, nor did they compare the content of a prime time magazine program with a traditional newscast. They did not address the question of whether the success of tabloid-style coverage has had an influence on the content of mainstream news, nor did they study the pervasiveness of the youformation story in both mainstream and prime time news magazine formats.

Methodology

A content analysis was conducted of a mainstream nightly newscast and a prime time news magazine. *Dateline* was chosen as the magazine-style program because, other than *60 Minutes*, it has been most consistently Neilsen's highest-rated prime time magazine. *60 Minutes* could not be used because it airs only on Sunday, and could not be compared to a nightly news broadcast. *Nightly News* was chosen because it is also produced by NBC News, which produces *Dateline*. Thus, none of the results of the study could be attributed to a different network's news philosophy.

To analyze the content of *Dateline*, the months of April and May of 1992 were selected, the year *Dateline* first aired. Four episodes were broadcast during each month. Those months were chosen because May represented a "sweeps" (television ratings) period, and April did not. This was done to control for any effect that ratings might have on the production of stories.

The same two months were analyzed in 1997. Because *Dateline* aired twice a week during 1997, the last two weeks of April and the first two weeks of May were analyzed. This represented eight episodes for both 1992 and 1997. The corresponding installments of *NBC Nightly News* on the same dates in both years were also analyzed to control for any anomalies in the events of the day. Weekend broadcasts were excluded because they inherently have less government and economic news. The total of stories analyzed was 177.

A primary coder and two secondary coders were used to test intercoder reliability. The primary coder had broadcast news experience and trained the other two coders. Each coder coded sixteen cases, two from each program from each time period. Overall intercoder reliability, based on percentage of agreement among the three coders, was 92.9%. This was acceptable considering the number of qualitative items and the size of some of the categories. The remainder of the cases were coded by the primary coder.

Transcripts were used to code the 1992 episodes. This was feasible since the transcripts included visual cues such as "shot of dead bodies" or "shot of [person being interviewed] crying." Video tapes of the broadcasts were obtained to code the 1997 episodes. Care was taken to ensure that nothing was coded in the video tapes that would not have been represented in the transcripts, such as length of story and content of commercial breaks and promotional announcements.

Stories were coded by category using a modified version of Stemple's (1985) categories of news. The category of news about celebrities was added because it is a staple of news magazine features (see Ehrlich, 1996). Celebrity news was defined as a story that most likely made news because of the prominence of the subject rather than the empirical content of the story (see Mayeux, 1996). This amounted to sixteen categories, including an "other" category for stories that could not be easily defined.

Stories were also classified by type: breaking news, investigative news and feature stories. Breaking news was defined as reporting of an event that occurred within the previous twenty-four hours (see Carroll, 1989). Investigative news was defined as any story that was an attempt to uncover illicit or unethical practices, or any story that involved such techniques as hidden cameras or news personnel under cover. Feature news was all news that was not dated, personal profiles, stories based on results of studies, or other news initiated by something other than an event.

Stories were also coded by subject, which was determined either by the primary interviewee in the story or the person or group that was mentioned most often. The subject was coded as either male, female, a family, several people, a homogeneous group (such as a town or community), a large segment of the population, or a business or corporation. The impact of the story, whether it affected an area that was local, regional, national, or international, was also determined and coded.

The use of both second person and first person was coded, and the number of times it was used in either the narration or anchor copy for each particular story. The nature of that usage was also coded, i.e., whether it posed a potential threat to the viewer, was meant to help the viewer, or whether its usage was neutral.

Content also was analyzed to determine if the story had victims and/or villains. Each was labeled as (1) an individual or (2) a business, group or corporation. Victims were defined as persons who were victimized by crime, a scam, a hoax, bureaucracy, or an act of nature. Stories could have victims without the presence of a villain.

The final category for coding was photos of the dead. News magazines often employ the use of photos of dead victims to dramatize the magnitude of crimes or events. Only still photos were counted; video of dead persons was too difficult to quantify. Each person in the photo was counted as one occurrence.

Because both the dependent and independent categories were nominal, chi-square analyses were used cross tabulating several variables to identify possible relationships.

Results

Nightly News used many more stories about victimization in 1997 than in 1992. Stories with victims increased 450% from 1992 (2) to 1997 (11). *Dateline* aired a much greater number of stories in 1992 about victimization than did *Nightly News*, but that number remained almost the same in the 1997 *Dateline* programs coded (see Table 1).

Stories containing business or corporate villains also increased from 1992 to 1997 in the *Nightly News* cases. Although the number of cases was too few to be statistically significant, the number of stories with group villains increased from one to six. Again, as with victims, the number of group villains in *Dateline* stories remained relatively constant during the two time periods (see Table 2).

Another significant difference occurred in the type of stories covered. These were the stories separated into categories of breaking, investigative and feature news. While number of investigative stories showed little change from 1992 to 1997 for either *Nightly News* or *Dateline*, *Nightly News* showed a shift from more breaking stories to more features. *Nightly News'* number of features increased from 22 to 33, while the number of breaking stories dropped from 28 to 19. Additionally, when breaking and investigative news were lumped together as a more "hard" news category, the numbers became significant (see Table 3). The number of hard news stories for *Nightly News* totaled 35 in 1992, and dropped to 23 in 1997. The number of features then became almost a reverse ($p \leq .05$).

Ratings periods seemed to have little effect in any of the categories as far as *Nightly News* was concerned. This was true for both 1992 and 1997. However, the same could not be said of *Dateline*. As Table 3.1 indicates, when type of news was collapsed into periods of non-sweeps and sweeps, the number of features more than doubled for the sweeps period. The number of breaking news stories was reduced by two-thirds and the number of investigative stories was less than half during the ratings period.

The use of second person in the anchor script and the voice-over (narration) followed the same pattern. In fact, the number stories with second person usage in the *Nightly News* scripts was identical to the number of victims for both 1992 and 1997 (see Table 4). There was some correlation between stories that contained victims and those using second person, but both victims and use of second person did not appear in all cases. *Dateline* also increased the number of stories using second person from 1992 to 1997. In 1997, *Dateline* used second person in almost 75% of its stories.

Both news programs showed a remarkable increase in May, 1997, in uses of photos of the dead. Note that this category counted the total number of photos rather than the number of stories using photos. This was done because the number of stories using photos was small, but a dramatic increase could be seen when the total number of photos was counted. As Table 5 indicates, *Nightly News* did not employ this technique at all in

1992. A check was made to see if one particular story skewed these results for May, 1997. In the case of *Dateline*, one story displayed nine photos of the dead and another seven. However, the fifteen photos used by *Nightly News* were spread among six stories, and no story contained more than four.

Discussion

There were several categories coded that yielded neither significant results nor displayed any trends. The categories of first person usage and subject are examples of such. However, the categories that did yield significant results tended to display distinct tendencies, especially in the analysis of *Nightly News*.

The increased use of second person, the emphasis on feature stories, as well as stories with victims and villains, combined with an increased usage of photos of the dead, lends support to the literature that suggests mainstream news (at least *NBC Nightly News*) has incorporated the techniques that were more common to the news magazine format of *Dateline* in years past. The fact that *Dateline's* numbers remained constant over time suggests that the change in *Nightly News* is more of an effect than a cause.

The fact that only *Dateline* appeared to be affected by sweeps is not surprising. One possible explanation is that *Dateline* is a prime time television program and its survival depends on ratings. *Nightly News* is a staple of NBC programming, and while producers are certainly interested in the numbers, they are not likely to dispense with the evening newscast because it falters in the ratings. They are more likely to make cosmetic changes that are less obvious during a sweeps period.

Content analysis has provided a foundation, but a closer examination of the scripts revealed some interesting qualitative information as well. Several stories fit the author's suggested criteria to be classified as youformation stories. The following is an excerpt from the anchor lead-in to a story about a police officer who attempts to help victims of abuse. It was broadcast on May 5, 1992:

> JANE PAULEY: Moms and dads argue in front of their kids no matter how much they try not to do it....Have you ever looked at their faces when you're arguing? When Mom and Dad fight it's upsetting, confusing, painful. It hurts. But what happens when it's not words, but fists that are thrown?
>
> STONE PHILLIPS: Even if it's behind closed doors, the children know what's happening. They hear it, and they feel it. Tonight, we go to Nashville, Tennessee, to meet some ordinary kids, *kids who could be your next door neighbors* [Ital added] growing up in homes where mom getting beat up is a fact of life. And you'll meet one extraordinary police officer who's trying to make a difference.

The first or second person is used six times in the intro, including a reference to "meeting" the police and the possibility that these victims may live next door to you. The rest of the story contained three other first person references and two photos of dead victims.

Another story that aired on *Nightly News* May 13, 1997, fit the mold of a youformation story. The story was a follow-up to the latest report on skin cancer and its relationship to sun bathing. The reporter examined several isolated cases of severe melanoma and implied that "this could happen to you," but provided no statistical evidence of the chances of it happening to "you." It contained seven second person references and two first person.

This study alone is not an indictment of network news producers nor producers of prime time news magazines. It should, however, serve as a starting block for further investigation of network news practices. It lends further support to the contentions of news critics who have said that the distinction between mainstream news and tabloid sensationalism has become blurred. Future studies might include content analyses of syndicated tabloid television news programs such as *Inside Edition* and *Hard Copy*, and comparisons to mainstream news. Surveys and observational studies of audience perception of mainstream and other news sources might also provide useful information. If Gerbner and others were right, the youformation story might be another source of paranoia among those who put their faith in the deliverers of national news.

Table 1
STORIES WITH VICTIMS

	*Nightly News**		*Dateline***	
	1992	1997	1992	1997
Yes	2	11	14	13
No	58	45	16	17

*$X^2 = 72.90$ df = 1 $p \leq .005$
**NS

Table 2
STORIES WITH VILLAINS

	*Nightly News**		*Dateline**	
	1992	1997	1992	1997
Ind	1	1	5	3
Corp	1	6	5	6
None	58	47	19	20

*NS

Table 3
TYPE OF STORY

	*Nightly News**		*Dateline***	
	1992	1997	1992	1997
Hard news	35	23	13	16
Soft news	22	33	17	14

*$X^2 = 4.75$ df = 1 $p \leq .05$
**NS

Table 3.1
DATELINE AFFECTED BY SWEEPS*

	Breaking	Investigative	Feature
non-sweeps	6	15	10
sweeps	2	6	21

*$X^2 = 9.76$ $df = 2$ $p \leq .008$

Table 4
USE OF SECOND PERSON

	*Nightly News**		*Dateline***	
	1992	1997	1992	1997
Yes	2	11	15	22
No	58	45	15	8

*$X^2 = 72.90$ $df = 1$ $p \leq .005$
**NS

Table 5
PHOTOS OF THE DEAD

DATE	*Nightly News*	*Dateline*
April 1992	--	7
May 1992	--	3
April 1997	2	2
May 1997	15	22

References

Carroll, R. (Spring, 1989). Market size and TV news values. *Journalism Quarterly*, 66(1), 49-56.

Cremedas, M.E., and Chew, F., (1994). The influence of tabloid-style television news on viewer recall. Paper presented to Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication 77th conference.

Ehrlich, M.C., (1996, February). The journalism of outrageousness: Tabloid television news vs. investigative news. *Journalism and Mass Communication Monographs*.

Gamson, J., (1995, May). Incredible news tabloids meet news. *Current*, pp. 3-7.

Gerbner, G. (1976). The scary world of TV's heavy viewer. *Psychology Today*, 9(11), 41-45.

Grabe, M.E., (1996). Tabloid and traditional television news magazine crime stories: Crime lessons and reaffirmation of social class distinctions. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 73(4), 927-945.

Graber, D.A., (1994, October). The infotainment quotient in routine television news: A director's perspective. *Discourse and Society*, pp. 483-508.

Hanson, C., (1994, November/December). The triumph of fuzz and wuzz. *Columbia Journalism Review*, p. 2.

Houston, F., (1996, January/February). The TV tabs' new tone. *Columbia Journalism Review*, p. 7-8.

Kurtz, H. (1996). Tabloid sensationalism is thriving on TV news, In Thomas Beel(Ed.), Messages 3, The Washington Post media companion, (pp. 203-208), Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Mayeux, P. (1996). Broadcast news writing and reporting, (2nd ed.). Dubuque, IA: Brown & Benchmark. pp. 5-6.

Rarick, D., and Lind, R. (1991, May). Audience evaluations of ethical issues in television journalism. Paper presented to the International Communication Association annual conference.

Rauch, W. (1993). Bias in the tabloids: A content analysis of *PrimeTime Live*. Master's thesis presented to Regent University.

Slattery, K.L., (1994). Sensationalism versus news of the moral life: Making the distinction. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 9(11), 5-15.

Slattery, K.L., and Hakanen, E.A., (1994, Spring). Sensationalism versus public affairs content of local television news: Pennsylvania revisited. *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media*, pp. 205-216.

Stempel, G. (Winter, 1985). Gatekeeping: The mix of topics and selection of stories. *Journalism Quarterly*, 62(4), 791-6.

Teenor, K. (1996). Tabloid television and network news: Is there a difference? Master's thesis presented to California State University Fullerton.

Wilkinson, J.S., and Fletcher, J.E., (1995). Bloody news and vulnerable populations: An ethical question. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 10(3), pp. 167-177.

PRIMING REPORTERS

A Study on how the Willie Horton Case Altered the Portrayal of Criminals

James Devitt
Doctoral Candidate
The Annenberg School for Communication
The University of Pennsylvania
658 Carroll Street, Apartment 2B
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 788-1685
ALBJMD@aol.com
(Postal mail address and telephone number effective until August 27, 1998)

Abstract

This paper reports that after the William Horton case became prominent, network news altered visual depictions of black and white criminals. Black criminals increasingly appeared in visuals similar to those that depicted Horton while white criminals were shown in different ways. These findings are evidence of visual framing. As an explanation for visual framing, this paper suggests the concept of visual priming, a process by which the news media alter the visual portrayal of issues or phenomena to reflect a salient incident.

Presented at the Association for Education in
Journalism and Mass Communication Convention
Radio-Television Journalism Division
August 5-8, 1998
Baltimore, Maryland

PRIMING REPORTERS

Introduction

When a massive earthquake struck the San Francisco Bay Area on October 17, 1989, television viewers from thousands of miles away could see the destruction left by the 7.1 quake. Network news offered several compelling visuals of the wreckage: an overhead shot of the Bay Bridge, a collapsed freeway, and hundreds of people evacuating their damaged homes. Another dramatic visual invited attention, not only because of the tragedy it conveyed, but also because of how it portrayed the extent of the disaster. The picture was a close-up of a burning building—so close the viewer could see little of its surroundings, possibly leading one to conclude that much of San Francisco was in flames. However, after several minutes, the camera pulled away, offering an aerial view of the burning building and several surrounding blocks. From this perspective, the viewer could see that the fire was limited to the single burning building and that the blaze did not affect the larger area. While both visuals included pictures of the same burning building, they led the viewer to draw largely different conclusions about the magnitude of the fire and its effect on the city.

The power of visuals has been well documented. This example, however, illustrates the impact of manipulating the same visuals—that is, how the same object, person, or event may be shown in dissimilar ways to offer vastly different depictions of the same entity. This process may be labeled **visual framing**.

Framing research has generally studied verbal discourse. Scholars have analyzed how words and phrases are used to offer various descriptions of affirmative action (Gamson and Modigliani, 1987; Kinder and Sanders, 1996), health care reform (Cappella and Jamieson, 1997), and political campaigns (Jamieson, 1992; Patterson, 1993). Often left unstudied is how journalists and others frame news items *visually*—how they offer different visuals of the same event, trend, or phenomenon that alter how these matters are represented to the public. This chapter considers visual frames and the factors that may influence their construction. It analyzes how images of Willie Horton—a convicted murderer who became an important part of George Bush's 1988 presidential campaign against Michael Dukakis—may have shaped subsequent visual framing of criminals in other network news stories.

Research has also considered the forces that construct and determine frames. Scholars have concluded that both journalists and sources influence the framing process. This study takes a different approach. It argues that although producers and reporters, rather than sources, select the visuals that form visual frames, high-profile news subjects can "prime" reporters to cover subsequent news items in certain ways, thereby influencing the visual framing process.

Before discussing this process, a review of the literature is necessary to show how crime news and other news content are constructed verbally and visually.

Literature review

Research on news coverage of crime and other topics suggests reporters decide which visuals will air. Campbell (1991) described how "60 Minutes" used different camera angles and distances for story subjects and reporters to establish, or reduce, credibility. Jamieson (1992) detailed how network news selected visuals to bolster reporters' story lines. Gans (1979) came to similar conclusions, arguing that network news visuals illustrated television journalists' spoken words.

Studies on crime coverage offer comparable findings, even though they generally do not consider visuals. Rather, they study the reporting of crime topics (e.g., violent crimes). According to these studies, news stories on crime often do not reflect the proportion of crimes committed and reported to law enforcement authorities. Rather, news overreports certain crimes and underreports others, thereby offering a portrait of crime that is more consistent with news production than with reality [i.e., crime statistics] (Gilliam et al., 1996).

Several researchers have found that both television and print news overreport violent crime, such as murder and assault (Garofalo, 1981; Gilliam et al., 1996; Graber, 1980; Jaehnig, Weaver, and Fico, 1981; Roshier, 1973; Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981), but underreport non-violent crimes (Surette, 1994) and ignore other types of crime (Lotz, 1991). In fact, murder and other types of violent crime top the list of crimes covered (Chermak, 1995), even though the incidence of violent crime has dropped in recent years (Butterfield, 1997c). In addition, Surette (1994) found that the media overreport "predator" crime—violent crimes in which the offender is a stranger—despite its unlikely occurrence. A 1997 study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that coverage of murders has increased 721 percent since 1993, even though the real-world homicide rate was dropping (Media Monitor, 1997; see also, Butterfield 1997a, 1997b).

Again, these studies analyzed the reporting of crime topics, rather than the use of visuals. However, they offer evidence that the press frames crime in ways that diverge from real-world crime rates. By overreporting violent acts, particularly murder, the news media frame crime as primarily violent, even though actual crime rates suggest otherwise.

Others have shown distinctions in the coverage of crimes committed by different racial groups. Gilliam et al. (1996) found that local television news overrepresented black violent crime and underrepresented white violent crime. Entman (1990) showed that framing of crime news extends to television visuals. He found that television news framed black news subjects differently than white ones. In a December 1989 week-long analysis of local television news coverage, Entman reported that when blacks appeared in stories, it was most likely to be in a piece on violent crime. In addition, black criminals were more likely than their white counterparts to be shown in mug shots, in handcuffs, and being led by police officers.

While news accounts do not reflect real-world rates, the forces that generate such content—and specifically, the visual framing reported by Entman—are not clear. Do the police overreport violent crimes to beat reporters or do journalists simply choose to report certain crimes while ignoring others? Also unclear is why crime topics change over time. For instance, if the press is largely interested in murder, why does its reporting of such crimes fluctuate over time, independent of real-world rates? Are there identifiable factors that prompt these changes? In sum, what is the dynamic that prompts the construction of visual frames?

Researchers have offered a variety of explanations, which are discussed below. I am going to explore five of them and argue that they do not account for visual framing. Specifically, I will examine the following views: 1. Journalists index source discourse, 2. News norms determine crime reporting, 3. Crime news reflects past patterns of coverage, 4. High-profile crimes prompt overreporting of similar crimes, and 5. High-profile crimes may alter news structures. I will then offer a sixth, visual priming, and test it, using as a case study network news coverage of crime before and after the Horton issue became prominent. The results suggest this is a viable alternative to explaining the construction of visual frames.

1. Journalists index source discourse

Several studies have analyzed how elites' perspectives are reported in news. These works have concluded that news organizations replicate the range of elites' views in their coverage, a process labeled "source indexing." Bennett (1990) described source indexing as a practice by which "(m)ass media professionals…'index' the range of voices and viewpoints in both news and editorials according to the range of views expressed in mainstream government debate about given topic" (106). According to this theory, by focusing on certain types of crimes and their causes, sources influence how crime is framed. It may also explain why coverage of crime varies over time: news content reflects the changing views of sources. But this theory may not account for the needs of journalists, which may be quite different than those of sources. In fact, source activities are often geared to meeting the press' needs rather than vice versa.

Research by Gamson and Modigliani (1987) addressed this matter. Their study was in done in the area of news frames, which they defined as rhetorical devices embedded in news coverage to advance arguments. The authors found that sponsor activities—i.e., actions taken by sources to promote their organizations in the news media—led to the rise of "no preferential treatment" and "reverse discrimination" frames in news coverage of affirmative action (166). "No preferential treatment" frames argue that affirmative action programs are contrary to the "American way" because race-conscious policies inevitably lead to preferential treatment. A sub-set of these frames, "reverse discrimination" frames, contend such programs advance the welfare of certain racial groups at the expense of individual rights (145-149).

However, the inclusion of these frames in news content does not wholly support the existence of source indexing. They noted the presence of several other frames in the affirmative action debate that were not prominent in news. They concluded that the successful frames—

those that appear in news, such as the "no preferential treatment" and "reverse discrimination" frames—are in part based on the news media's needs for balance and drama. Those that do not meet these criteria are generally excluded from coverage.

In sum, source indexing does not appear to fully capture the relationship between reporters and sources with regard to news content. According to Gamson and Modigliani, reporters do transmit the views of sources—in this case, frames—but only those that meet standard news norms of balance and drama. However, their analysis does show that sources may be responsible for *introducing* elements that eventually become prominent aspects of news content. This will be explored below.

2. News norms determine crime reporting

Gamson and Modigliani concluded that news content is partly explained by criteria that satisfy journalists' needs. These include the need for balance and drama. In crime reporting, this standard has often meant the reporting of certain offenses that often bear little relation to the rate and nature of crimes committed in a community, state, or region (Jerin and Fields, 1994; Skogan and Maxfield, 1981). Instead, news organizations in different communities tend to cover crime in the same manner, in terms of the amount and nature of crimes reported (Skogan and Maxfield (1981); Surette, 1992).

Surette (1992) concluded that these findings suggest media messages about crime depend not on the volume or nature of crimes, but on the application of a consistent set of criteria as to what constitutes news—i.e., news norms. Chermak (1994) added that novel and dramatic crimes are likely to be selected as news stories because they meet important criteria for news. Violent crime is both novel, because it happens less frequently than non-violent crime (Surette, 1992), and dramatic. As discussed above, this perspective also explains Gamson and Modigliani's (1987) finding on the prominence of certain frames in news coverage of affirmative action.

News norms may also explain the findings of Althaus et al. (1996). They found that journalists simplified the reporting of congressional debate on U.S. actions toward Libya to include sources who were either opposed to or in favor of proposed actions, but excluded the views of elected officials who had alternative perspectives. This is evidence of the journalistic practice of reporting "both" sides of a story (Tuchman, 1972, 665), while not acknowledging an issue may have more than two sides.

This perspective broadens the concept of source indexing. It notes the influence sources have on news while contending that these views must meet news norms in order to appear in the news pages or on the airwaves. Sources may provide journalists with viewpoints and information, but these items must meet news norms in order to gain journalistic acceptance. Journalists are the ultimate arbiters of the views present in news content.

While news norms address why certain views become prominent and others are neglected, they do not explain fluctuations in coverage. Murders, for instance, are not covered at the same rates over time. A study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs found that coverage of murders has varied in the 1990s, with no apparent relation to real-world murder rates (Media Monitor, 1997). If news norms were the sole determinant of content, the types of crimes reported would not fluctuate, unless, of course, news norms continually changed, which is unlikely. Moreover, news norms do not account for how crime may be framed visually. Instead, news norms explain the number of views and types of crimes reported. Other research addresses these matters.

3. Crime news reflects past pattern of coverage

Surette (1992) discussed media "consonance," in which a news event is linked to previous news themes and accepted public images and explanations. Unexpected and unusual events will be reported, but will be presented in terms of previously established stories and explanations. Consequently, a cycle of newsworthiness is created in which once a type of crime is defined as news, it will continue to be news. This process occurred in the media's reporting of crimes against the elderly in New York in the 1970s. Initial reporting of such crimes fed future reporting of the same types of offenses so that crimes against the elderly dominated the news agenda and led to the false perception of a crime wave (Fishman, 1978). In short, the seriousness of the crime problem was defined inside newsrooms rather than outside of them, in part based on the original reporting of a single type of crime (Fishman, 1978).

Skidmore (1995) reached similar conclusions in her study of the British media's coverage of sexual abuse of children. She found the reporting on past cases influenced that of future incidents because reporters examined earlier news stories in covering current cases. In addition, she found that journalists tended to focus on stereotypes in reporting such matters. These included blaming social workers for incidents of abuse (89).

Ericson, Baranek, and Chan (1987) produced comparable findings, arguing that journalists are often not experts in areas they cover and rely on previous news items rather than "definitive professional texts" in writing their stories (348, 350). As a consequence, they wrote, news comes closer to reflecting "the social and cultural reality of its own organization than to mirroring the events it reports on" (350). Others reached analogous conclusions (Cook, 1998; Ericson, Baranek, and Chan, 1991; Fishman, 1978; Schlesinger and Tumber, 1994).

These studies, then, point to an explanation for changes in coverage. It is not simply news norms that determine content, but also the initial reporting of certain types of crimes. These crimes feed the coverage of future crimes. In addition, because reporters rely on earlier coverage, rather than on public officials or other resources, it appears news organizations are responsible for this phenomenon. Moreover, this practice extends beyond the reporting of news topics. It also explains *how* news events are covered. Specifically, reporters consult on earlier news items, such as stories on child abuse, and offer similar explanations for contemporary crimes.

While this research reveals the nature of journalistic practice, it does not explain *why* certain types of crimes become prominent in the first place or why others are ignored. Consequently, this process does not explain the Horton case's impact on visual framing. Additional studies address this matter.

4. High-profile crimes prompt overreporting of similar crimes

Other research has suggested that high-profile, but possibly isolated, crime incidents have prompted the news media to overreport subsequent, similar crimes. Findings from the Center for Media and Public Affairs indicate that the O.J. Simpson case may have increased network news coverage of murders. The researchers found that network news stories on murders—*excluding* those on the Simpson case—increased by 356 percent after 1993, the year before the killings of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Chibnall (1977) detailed how two British teenagers came to personify delinquency in that country's news pages. Katz (1980) reported similar phenomena with regard to Watergate. Reviewing the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, he found that after Watergate stories on government investigations of white-collar crime increased. He added that the *New York Times* began listing articles under a category for "white-collar crime in 1975, a year after President Nixon's resignation (180, fn. 7).

Bennett and Lawrence (1995) found evidence for this phenomenon in other types of coverage. They concluded that the prominence of a garbage barge in search of a port that would accept its cargo increased subsequent *New York Times*' coverage of recycling and environmental issues. They also found that journalists—rather than sources—often introduced the barge as a symbol for the nation's waste problems. They labeled the barge and similar high-profile entities "news icons." News icons, they wrote, begin as visual images—such as the raising of the American flag at Iwo Jima—and are "sustained through narratives that journalists, sources, and audiences project onto them" (23).

These studies, then, offer an explanation for *why* news organizations overreport certain types of crimes and other matters. High-profile crimes, such as Watergate, serve as a beacon for journalists, who then overreport similar crimes in future coverage. As a consequence, the image of crime—as it appears in news—is not related to real-world crime rates, but, rather, to high-profile crimes.

While this research explains the rise of certain types of crimes, it does not consider how news icons, including high-profile crimes, change the way news is structured. Are news stories constructed the same way in terms of relying on the same sources and images, or do news icons encourage reporters to alter the way they cover related topics? Consequently, these studies only address changes in news topics, not framing or other aspects of news content. Other work shows how news icons may bring about changes in news structures and as well as news topics.

5. High-profile crimes may alter news structures

Other studies on news icons have shown that they may alter news content. Lawrence (1996) found that the *Los Angeles Times* changed the nature of its coverage of police brutality after the 1991 Rodney King incident. Not only did coverage of the issue increase after the beating—a finding consistent with research on news icons—but also the paper's range of sources on police brutality expanded to include non-officials, thereby altering how the subject was framed verbally. Unlike earlier coverage, stories after the King incident were more likely to contain views that police brutality was caused by departmental racism, lax police management, and an "ugly police subculture" (447).

Similarly, Dahl and Bennett (1996) studied the impact of George Bush's illness during a trade mission to Japan—which they consider a news icon—on subsequent press coverage. They concluded that the image of the president collapsing and vomiting on the Japanese prime minister encouraged future coverage in which reporters portrayed the United States' economic status as weaker—and Japan's stronger—than economic data suggested. They wrote that "news icons invite journalists to become active participants in a process of public problem definition without presenting a formal argument…(N)ews icons provide moments for uncharacteristically direct journalistic authorship of the news narrative" (48). Icons, then, can alter the depiction of larger phenomena, independent of real-world data.

This research takes us a step closer to understanding how high-profile events can alter news content. However, this research only considers how news icons influence the verbal—rather than the visual—framing of news. This is a significant distinction, which will be explored below.

As a whole, research on crime news suggests that the media report certain types of crimes (i.e., those that are consistent with news norms) and that certain, high-profile crimes can influence the reporting of future crimes. Moreover, not only do high-profile, or salient, crimes (i.e., news icons) encourage the reporting of similar offenses, but, also, that such crimes may prompt journalists to alter the nature of their stories by quoting a wider range of sources. Other research in this area has concluded that news icons may lead reporters to offer a portrait of reality that is consistent with the icon but conflicts with real-world data.

However, research on news icons does not address how they may influence reporting in other ways, such as the visual depiction of news items. The news icons analyzed by Bennett and his colleagues are, in fact, unusual occurrences. Images of the president of the United States vomiting in public or of a garbage barge in search of a port do not occur with any great frequency. Consequently, reporters do not have the opportunity to highlight visually similar instances in subsequent coverage. Rather, they link icons with related phenomena, such as recycling or trade. Because alike instances are unlikely to occur, it is improbable that such icons can influence how future news is framed visually, short of repeatedly showing the original icons. However, there may be instances in which news icons are similar visually to re-occurring phenomena, such as plane crashes or "perp walks," in which law enforcement officials lead a handcuffed accused criminal, usually to or from jail. With the availability of visuals that are similar to those of news icons, icons may influence how news is framed visually. This will be explored in the next section.

Before discussing a theory that may explain visual framing, a re-cap of existing theories is necessary to understand how source-reporter relations may affect this process, specifically with regard to crime coverage. While studies on news icons suggest that reporters can drive changes in coverage, the role of sources cannot be ignored. Source indexing appears to partially capture sources' function in crime coverage because it may account for why salient crimes enter the news agenda in the first place. Certainly, journalists must rely on others to bring the occurrence of crimes to their attention, whether it is police officers, district attorneys, or non-elite citizens bearing videotape. Yet, as Gamson and Modigliani (1987) concluded, such crimes must meet news norms. More importantly, it is up to the news media to give them prominence by either repeatedly mentioning the original crime or by overreporting similar crimes. It appears, then, that sources bring incidents to reporters' attention. Reporters, in turn, make them salient based on news norms. Finally, according to research on news icons, high-profile incidents can alter the verbal depiction of real-world phenomena.

What is still uncertain, though, is how these forces interact to account for visual framing. Part of the answer may lie in psychological research, specifically studies on priming. These studies, combined with media's tendency to overreport crimes that are similar to high-profile crimes, offer a sixth explanation of news coverage: visual priming.

6. Salient incidents activate visual priming

Iyengar and Kinder (1987) described priming in the following way: "By calling attention to some matters while ignoring others, television news influences the standards by which governments, presidents, and candidates for public office are judged" (63). In other words, if the news media generally focus on economy in their coverage, the public will judge the president's overall performance based on his handling of economy.

While priming is a psychological effect and news icons reflect the practices of news organizations, in combination they may explain the aforementioned changes in news coverage. Bennett and Lawrence (1995) found the repetition of the same news icons in news stories over time. Dahl and Bennett (1996) concluded that news icons may alter the verbal depiction of real-world phenomena. This research suggests that high-profile events can influence subsequent coverage. Similarly, Fishman (1978), Katz (1980), and Skidmore (1995) found changes in news based on coverage of earlier, high-profile crimes. But this coverage did not suggest the presence of news icons. Rather, it appears, the significance of earlier high-profile events is often implicit: e.g., reporters increasingly focused on white-collar crime without necessarily mentioning the Nixon administration. As a consequence, certain crimes influenced the reporting of future crimes, thereby altering the definition of what constituted criminal activity. After Watergate, greater news coverage of similar misdeeds suggested that white-collar offenses defined crime. Also, after the Simpson and Goldman murders, heavier news coverage of murder indicated that homicide typified America's crime problem, even though real-world rates were declining.

What appears to take place in these instances is the priming of reporters. This occurs when the news media alter the portrayal of issues or phenomena to reflect a salient incident. This contention is based on research of news topics and verbal frames. However, if this occurs with written or spoken news content, it may also apply to visual content. This process may be labeled **visual priming**. *Visual priming occurs when the news media alter the visual portrayal of issues or phenomena to reflect a salient incident.* In other words, prominent occurrences or people "prime" reporters so that they increasingly focus on similar examples in subsequent coverage, thereby altering the visual depictions of relevant issues or phenomena. Network news coverage of crime after the Horton case became prominent may be an instance of media priming. In this case, reporters may have begun portraying criminals in ways similar to Horton, implicitly suggesting that Horton—and criminals like him (i.e., black and violent)—defined America's crime problem. A brief recounting of its impact on the 1988 presidential campaign reveals how the case became so prominent among news organizations.

The Horton Issue

During the 1988 presidential campaign, Republican presidential nominee George Bush attacked his Democratic counterpart, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis on furloughs given to Massachusetts criminals. These, said Bush, included first-degree murderers not eligible for parole. Bush often cited one such prisoner, Willie Horton, who escaped during a furlough and raped a woman in Maryland before being apprehended. Complementing Bush's discourse was advertising from a pro-Bush group—the National Security Political Action Committee—that featured Horton. Network news also covered the Horton case repeatedly, both as a crime story and, as the campaign wore on, as an effective Bush campaign tactic. Stories included both pictures of Horton (e.g., his police mug shot, Horton being led away in handcuffs) and the ads featuring Horton, an African-American male convicted of murder. In short, like the Simpson case and Watergate, the Horton issue became a high-profile crime case.

Previous studies focused on how high-profile crimes influenced the *types* of subsequent crimes the media reported (e.g., murder, attacks on the elderly). This chapter analyzes how network news portrays criminals visually. It is not concerned with how the television media overreported or underreported the *type* of crimes Horton committed (i.e., murder and rape). Rather, it is concerned with how network news portrayed criminals in relation to Horton. Were black criminals more likely than white criminals to be shown as Horton was shown? (e.g., handcuffed and restrained by police) Were white criminals more likely than black criminals to be shown in ways far removed from the Horton visuals? (e.g., in suits and in courtrooms) In short, did the Horton case prime network news to portray white and black criminals differently?

Research I did with Jamieson (1992) found some evidence for visual priming. The study compared the portrayal of criminals in network news stories from 1985 to 1989 to that in stories covering the crime issue in 1988 presidential campaign. The latter sample coded all criminals, with the exception of Horton. The proportion of blacks identified or shown as criminals in the 1988 stories was significantly higher than in non-campaign stories in other years. This finding suggests that Horton may have served as the visual template for criminals in presidential campaign stories on crime because black criminals were more likely to be shown in these stories than in those in other years. In short, the Horton case may have primed the news media to portray criminals to resemble Horton in succeeding news stories. However, unlike previous work on news icons, the icon—Horton—does not appear in the stories. Rather, his impact is implicit.

Here I take these findings a step further by analyzing whether Horton served as a visual template, or news icon, for other crime stories in 1988 and for crime stories in 1989: Did the case prime reporters to portray criminals differently in subsequent stories? Our research showed that Horton appeared to influence the proportion of black criminals featured in presidential campaign coverage. This study asks if similar phenomena occurred beyond campaign coverage in 1988 and into 1989: Did the networks portray black criminals differently after the Horton case became prominent? It also asks if network news portrayed *white* criminals in ways that were quite different from Horton, such as in suits, in interviews or press conferences, or in courtrooms. Such visuals make criminals appear less menacing because they do not show them detained;

rather, they show them communicating to the public, dressed formally, or as part of the legal process. In short, they do not appear as criminals.

Entman's (1990) work offers some support for these phenomena. He found that black criminals were more likely than white ones to be shown in mug shots and restrained by police. However, his study only included news coverage *after* the Horton incident became prominent, preventing a comparison with pre-Horton crime news.

This explanation for visual framing also addresses the impact reporters and sources have on this process. Consistent with the concept of visual priming, I will argue that reporters, rather than sources, determined the hypothesized changes in the visual frames in crime coverage. Previous research has concluded that high-profile crimes influence the reporting of future crimes. In some instances, reporters refer to previous crime stories in reporting contemporary ones. In others, journalists broaden the scope of sources, thereby diminishing the influence of official sources. Additional studies have found that coverage of certain types of crimes, such as murder, often has no relationship to their actual rate of occurrence. As a whole, this research suggests that reporters determine which crimes are covered and how they are covered. This study advances this research and argues that reporters, drawing upon high-profile crimes and criminals, determine how criminals are framed visually.

Hypotheses

The study's hypotheses fall into two basic categories. First, alleged black criminals[1] in 1988 and 1989 were more likely than alleged black criminals in 1986, 1987, and January 1988 (i.e., the period before the Horton issue reached national prominence) to be shown as Horton was shown. In the now-famous "Willie Horton" ad, produced by the National Security Political Action Committee (Simon, 1990), and in network news coverage, Horton was shown in more than one type of visual. He was shown in handcuffs, in a mug shot, and being restrained by police. He was not shown in prison. However, because Horton was shown in custody, the study coded for visuals that showed criminals in prison. Visuals of criminals in prison are similar to those of criminals restrained by police or in handcuffs because they show criminals detained by law enforcement or corrections officials. Moreover, prison visuals—as opposed to those of courtrooms or press conferences—clearly show those pictured as criminals.

---

[1] The term "alleged" criminal is necessary because those depicted in news stories were sometimes later acquitted.

If the Horton visuals influenced the portrayal of black criminals in subsequent crime stories, black criminals in June 1988 and January 1989 (Time 2) would be more likely to be shown as Horton was shown than were black criminals in 1986, 1987, and January 1988 (Time 1):

H1: Alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in handcuffs in Time 2 than in Time 1.

H2: The mug shots of alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in Time 2 than in Time 1.

H3: Alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown led or restrained by police in Time 2 than in Time 1.

H4: Alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in prison in Time 2 than in Time 1.

The second category of hypotheses pertains to alleged white criminals. If the Horton visuals influenced those of black criminals, it follows that white criminals were shown in ways quite different from Horton:

H5: Alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown with attorneys in Time 2 than in Time 1.

The methodology section explains this definition in greater detail.

H6: Alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown in suits in Time 2 than in Time 1.

H7: Alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown in courtrooms in Time 2 than in Time 1.

H8: Alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown in interviews or press conferences in Time 2 than in Time 1.

These visuals, because they do not show criminals detained, suggest that those pictured are not criminals at all. Rather, they resemble other types of news subjects: public officials, experts, celebrities, and white-collar employees. Moreover, they suggest a stark divergence from the visual portrayal of black criminals after the Horton case became prominent.

Methodology

The database for this study is network news coverage (ABC, CBS, and NBC) from 1986-1989. The sample included every crime story aired in the last half of January and June in these years. Crime stories selected were based on descriptions in the Vanderbilt News Archive abstracts. The sample excluded stories on the Iran-Contra affair, which would have skewed the sample toward white criminals had they been included. The heaviest coverage of Iran-Contra in the sampled period occurred during the June 1987 congressional hearings.

The study coded every criminal or alleged criminal in these stories. The term "alleged criminal" is necessary because some individuals shown were acquitted of the crimes they were tried for or their convictions were later overturned on appeal. Some of those coded appeared in backdrop inserts in stories about crime. However, because both criminals and alleged criminals were often shown in the same manner (e.g., in handcuffs), the legal distinctions were often meaningless in relation to the visuals. Therefore, both alleged criminals and criminals formed a single category: alleged criminals. Because every alleged criminal was coded, a single visual could have included 10 alleged criminals. This often required replaying the tapes of stories several times to determine how many alleged criminals appeared in a single visual and how they were portrayed.

The analysis coded several aspects of these visuals. First, the study coded the race of every alleged criminal: white, black, Hispanic, or unidentifiable, in which the race could not be determined. Of the 871 alleged criminals in the sampled stories, 675 were white, 131 were black, nine were Hispanic, and 56 were unidentifiable. It also coded the visuals of alleged criminals in ways that were consistent with—and quite different from—those of Horton. The Horton visuals showed him in the following ways: in a mug shot (i.e., a close-up picture of his face), in handcuffs, with police officers, and being restrained by police officers. The study coded these visuals. The study also coded the following: alleged criminals in prison, in suits, in interviews or press conferences, in courtrooms, and with their attorneys. The visual categories were not mutually exclusive. For instance, criminals could be shown in courtrooms and in handcuffs. I ran separate cross-tabulations for the race of the criminals and each visual and compared the proportions of alleged criminal visuals within racial categories. Because there were so few visuals of alleged Hispanic criminals, I only compared proportions of black and white criminals.

I considered mid-June 1988 the point at which the Horton case could have reasonably begun to influence the portrayal of criminals in network news.2 Even though Bush did not use Horton's name in a speech until June 22, 1988, Bush and the Republicans began attacking Dukakis on the furlough issue on June 9 at the Texas Republican state convention in Houston

---

2 CBS ran a story on the Massachusetts furlough program on December 2, 1987 and NBC did the same on January 21, 1988. Both stories mentioned the Horton case. However, none of the networks began regularly featuring Horton until the summer of 1988.

(Cramer, 1992, 1010-1011; Simon, 1990, 217-218).3 In addition, the Massachusetts furlough program and Horton had been circulating among news organizations much earlier. In 1987, the *Lawrence Eagle-Tribune* did more than 200 stories on the furlough program—which included coverage of the Horton incident—and won a Pulitzer Prize for them in March 1988, giving the case national prominence. *Newsweek* ran a story in January 1988 on a voter registration drive in Massachusetts prisons that mentioned Horton (Simon, 1990, 212). On March 28, *Business Week* ran an opinion column attacking Dukakis, in part over the Horton case (Simon, 1990, 212). By late June, *Time* had run a story on the Massachusetts furlough program using Horton's picture (Simon, 218-219). In addition, then-Senator Al Gore raised the furlough issue in mid-April 1988 during a New York primary debate (Simon, 1990, 212-213). Given the attention the Horton case received among news organizations during the winter and spring of 1988, one could reasonably expect changes in network news visuals beginning in the second half of June.

Proportions of black and white criminals in each visual (e.g., in handcuffs, in a courtroom, mug shot) were calculated. A Z score was calculated to determine if the proportions of visuals within racial groups were significantly different between Time 1 (1986, 1987, January 1988) and Time 2 (June 1988, January 1989). There were 499 visuals of criminals in Time 1 and 372 in Time 2. Of these, 806 were analyzed: 367 white criminal visuals and 90 black criminal visuals in Time 1 and 308 white criminal visuals and 41 black criminal visuals in Time 2.

---

[3] Kinder and Sanders (1996) wrote that Horton and the furlough program became "a fixture" in Bush's speeches even sooner—in early June (234).

Results

Alleged Black Criminals

Hypotheses 1 through 4 predicted that alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in visuals similar to those in which Horton was shown. The findings supported two of these hypotheses and did not support two others (see Table 1, Appendix A). H1 predicted that black criminals were more likely to be shown in handcuffs in June 1988 and January 1989 (Time 2) than in 1986, 1987, and January 1988 (Time 1). A higher proportion of black criminals were indeed shown in handcuffs in Time 2—27 percent to 21 percent—but the difference was not statistically significant (Z=.734). H2 predicted that mug shots of alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in Time 2 than in Time 1. The findings did not support this hypothesis, either. In fact, the proportion of mug shots of black criminals slightly declined from Time 1 to Time 2. Perhaps this finding is not surprising. The use of mug shots is longstanding and common device in network news. As we shall see, the proportion of mug shots of white criminals also remained unchanged over the two time periods.

H3 predicted that alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown led or restrained by police in Time 2 than in Time 1. The findings supported this hypothesis. Twenty-nine percent of alleged black criminals in Time 2 were shown led or restrained by police, consistent with the way Horton was shown in the PAC ad and in network news coverage. In contrast, less than 6 percent of alleged black criminals in Time 1 were shown in this manner (Z=3.7).

The findings also supported H4, which predicted that alleged black criminals were more likely to be shown in prison in Time 2 than in Time 1. Twenty-seven percent of alleged black criminals were shown in this way in Time 2, but only 11 percent in Time 1 (Z=2.32).

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Though not part of my hypotheses, I also compared proportions of alleged black criminal visuals that were quite different from those of Horton over the two time periods. These visuals were the following: with an attorney, in a suit, in a courtroom, and in an interview or press conference. As Table 2 shows, alleged black criminals were no more or less likely to be shown in with an attorney, in a courtroom, or in an interview or press conference in Time 2 (See Appendix A). In addition, they were significantly *less* likely to be shown in suits in Time 2 (Z=2.81). As a whole, these findings reveal that alleged black criminals in Time 2 were significantly more likely to be shown in ways similar to Horton (i.e., restrained and in prison), but they were not any more likely to be shown in ways that were different from Horton. In sum, alleged black criminals began to appear more like Horton, not less like him.

INSERT TABLE TWO HERE

Alleged White Criminals

Hypotheses 5 through 8 predicted that alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown in visuals different from those in which Horton was shown. The findings supported two of these hypotheses and did not support two others (see Table 3, Appendix A). H6 predicted that alleged white criminals were more likely to be shown in suits in Time 2 than in Time 1. The findings supported this hypothesis: 18 percent of alleged white criminals were shown in suits in Time 1 while 28 percent were shown in this way in Time 2 (Z=3.12). Alleged white criminals were also significantly more likely to be shown in press conferences or interviews in Time 2 than in Time 1 (Z=1.67), as predicted by H8. The findings did not support H5 or H7, which predicted higher proportions of white criminals with attorneys and in courtrooms in Time 2 than in Time 1 (see Table 3).

INSERT TABLE 3 HERE

Although not part of the hypotheses, I calculated the proportions of visuals of white criminals to determine if they, like black criminals, were more likely to be portrayed as Horton was portrayed in Time 2 than in Time 1. This was not the case. The proportion of alleged white criminals in these visuals did not significantly change from Time 1 to Time 2 (see Table 4, Appendix A). These findings reveal a sharper contrast between the portrayal of alleged white and black criminals in Time 2. While alleged black criminals in Time 2 were more likely to be portrayed as Horton was portrayed, alleged white criminals were no more likely to be shown in this manner. This reveals a divergence in the portrayal of alleged black and white criminals after the Horton issue became prominent. This will be further discussed in the final section. Also, as was the case with alleged black criminals, there was no significant increase in the proportion of mug shots of alleged white criminals. This is further evidence that mug shots are a standard feature of news, unaffected by the visual of Horton's mug shot.

INSERT TABLE 4 HERE

Crime Rates

Another explanation for the change in network news visuals might be an increase in violent crime, particularly murder, in 1988 or an increase in the proportion of blacks committing these types of crimes. Violent criminals may be more likely to be shown restrained, as was Horton, or in prison. And, if blacks were committing a higher proportion of violent crimes during this time period, the media may show a greater proportion of black criminals in this manner. Such a change in real-world crime rates would reduce the possibility that Horton influenced the portrayal of criminals on the networks.

Statistics from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports* offer a mixed picture of crimes committed during this time period.4 The nation's murder rate in 1988 was higher than in 1987 and 1985, but lower than the 1986 rate (see Figure 1, Appendix B).

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Overall, the proportion of black offenders increased from 1985 levels while that of white offenders declined. However, the proportions of both black and white offenders increased *and* declined in the intervening years (see Figure 2, Appendix B).

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

In sum, there was neither a consistent increase in the proportion of black offenders nor a steady decrease in that of white offenders from 1985 to 1988. Therefore, neither overall homicide rates nor the proportions of offenders explain the change in the portrayal of black and white criminals. Had real-world-crime influenced these changes, distinctions between white and black criminals in network news would have appeared in 1986, disappeared in 1987—when the proportions of offenders were equal—and re-appeared in 1988. Moreover, differences in the proportions between black and white offenders in these years are relatively small, never separated by more than 5 percent. These data, then, do not explain the divergent portrayals of alleged black and white criminals in network news, beginning after the Horton case became prominent.

Figure 3 (see Appendix B) shows a rise in violent crime during the studied time period. Violent crimes include murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. This change may justify increases in the portrayal of criminals who are detained, either in prison or by law enforcement officials. However, while 1988 marked a peak year among the four in violent crime,

---

4 I excluded 1989 because the network news data included only January, making 1989 crime rates meaningless to

there was a bigger increase in violent crime between 1985 and 1986 than between 1987 and 1988.

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

Moreover, as displayed in Figure 4 (see Appendix B), the proportion of black offenders of violent crimes was lower than that of white offenders in all four years, including 1988. The racial-makeup of violent criminals, then, did not change, even though the networks' portrayal of criminals certainly did.

INSERT FIGURE 4 HERE

Discussion

The data supported four of the eight hypotheses. However, taken as a whole, the findings suggest a marked change in the way alleged black and white criminals were portrayed in network news after Willie Horton became a prominent figure. Black criminals were more likely to be shown detained by law enforcement or corrections officials in mid-June 1988 and January 1989 (Time 2) than in 1986, 1987, and January 1988 (Time 1). In contrast, white criminals were not any more likely to be shown in these ways in Time 2. In addition, white criminals were more likely to be shown in ways that did not show them detained in Time 2 than in Time 1 (i.e., in suits and in interviews or press conferences). By comparison, black criminals were no more likely to be shown in these or similar ways, such as in a courtroom or with attorneys.

Real-world crime rates do not explain the data. Murder and violent crime rates, and the proportions of black and white offenders in both categories, fluctuated in ways that are not consistent with the divergent portrayal of criminals in network news, beginning in 1988. In fact, the proportion of white offenders for violent crimes was higher than that for black offenders in

---

this analysis. Interestingly, while the murder rate increased in 1989, the January murder rate was below that year's all four years. Moreover, the differences between the proportions of black and white offenders are too small to explain their discrete portrayals after the Horton case became prominent.

In sum, the network news data reveal a divergence in the portrayal of alleged black and white criminals after the Horton issue reached prominence. Black criminals increasingly appeared in visuals similar to those that depicted Horton while white criminals increasingly appeared in those starkly different from the Horton visuals.

These findings are evidence of visual framing in network news coverage of crime. Criminals were not portrayed uniformly over the time periods analyzed. Rather, they were shown in significantly different ways, thereby altering the visual representations of what constituted black and white criminals. However, previous studies have not accounted for the production of visual frames. As an explanation for visual framing I offered the concept of visual priming. This was defined as a process by which the news media alter the visual portrayal of issues or phenomena to reflect a salient incident. Indeed, the data suggest the Willie Horton visuals were a catalyst for these frames. After Horton—and the visuals showing him restrained by police—reached prominence, network news altered the way it portrayed both black and white criminals. Alleged black criminals began to look more like Horton, alleged white criminals less so. Given the high-profile nature of the Horton case and the visuals used to depict him, it is not surprising to find that other black criminals were increasingly shown in similar ways, beginning in the summer of 1988.

---

monthly average.

Impact on Public Attitudes

Beyond offering insight into how news is constructed, these findings may also have some bearing on whites' attitudes toward blacks and on governmental policies designed to ameliorate racial discrimination. Mendelberg (1997) found that a network news story on Horton activated prejudiced attitudes and inflated opposition to racially egalitarian policies—such as government spending on blacks and affirmative action in schools—among prejudiced white subjects. At the same time, the Horton story did *not* increase the significance of crime as a social problem among subjects, suggesting that the Horton issue influenced the public solely on racial matters.

Gilliam et al. (1996) showed that similar effects may apply to coverage of other black criminals. Exposure to news stories with a black perpetrator—as opposed to a white perpetrator—increased subjects' concern about crime. Racial attitudes also influenced some subjects' perceptions of the causes of crime and solutions to reducing crime. Subjects with high negative stereotypes of blacks were more likely than those with low negative stereotypes to offer group-based attributions of responsibility (i.e., breakdown of the family and religious values in the black community) and favor punitive policies. Moreover, only racial imagery triggered these sentiments; the level of violence in news coverage of crime did not affect viewers' opinions. By increasingly portraying other black criminals in the way Horton was shown, networks may have activated similar attitudes among white network news viewers.

In sum, this analysis reveals changes in the way criminals were portrayed in network news visuals *after* the Willie Horton case became prominent. Newscasts showed black and white criminals in divergent ways, with black criminals more closely resembling Horton and white criminals appearing in suits and press conferences. Given past research, it is likely journalists, rather than sources such as law enforcement officials, engineered this shift. These changes are evidence of visual framing, in which the visual representations of a person, event, or phenomenon are altered to fit the news media's perceptions of these entities. As a catalyst for visual framing, I offered the concept of visual priming, which occurs when the news media alter the portrayal of issues or phenomena to reflect a salient event or person. The results supported this as a factor of visual priming. As a consequence of visual priming, real-life depictions of people and events may bear little resemblance to reality.

APPENDIX A

TABLE 1: Black criminals in visuals similar to Horton visuals

			Visual					
Time Period	*Handcuffs* (%)	n	*Mug shot* (%)	n	*Restrained* (%)**	n	*Prison* (%)**	n
Time 1	21	19	19	17	5.6	5	11	10
Time 2	27	11	12	5	29	12	27	11

**Z>1.96

TABLE 2: Black criminals in visuals dissimilar to Horton visuals

			Visual					
Time Period	*Attorney* (%)	n	*In suit*** (%)	n	*Courtroom* (%)	n	*Interview/ Press conference* (%)	n
Time 1	3.3	3	29	26	8.9	8	13	12
Time 2	4.9	2	7.3	3	4.9	2	15	6

**Z>1.96

TABLE 3: White criminals in visuals dissimilar to Horton visuals

			Visual					
Time Period	*Attorney* (%)	n	*In suit*** (%)	n	*Courtroom* (%)	n	*Interview/ Press conference* (%)*	n
Time 1	8.2	30	18	66	17	63	17	63
Time 2	9.1	28	28	85	18	56	22	69

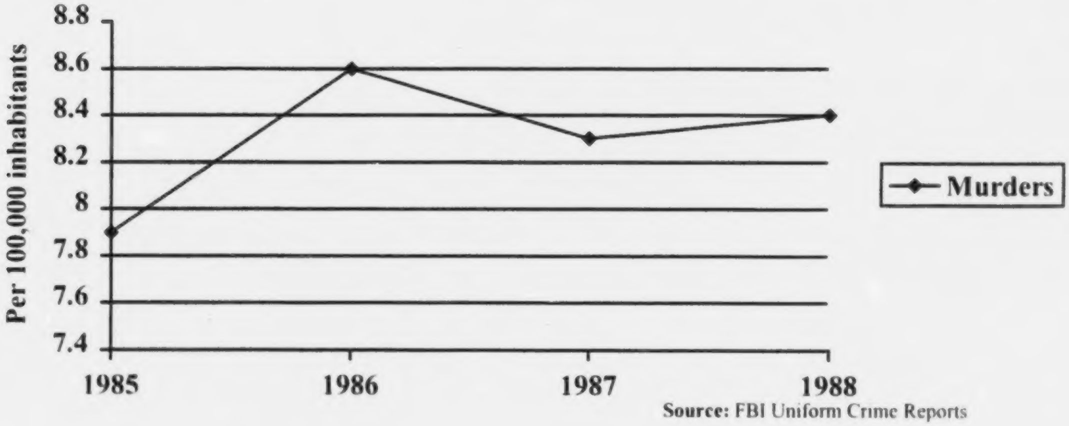
*Z>1.65
**Z>1.96

TABLE 4: White criminals in visuals similar to Horton visuals

			Visual					
Time Period	*Handcuffs* (%)	n	*Mug shot* (%)	n	*Restrained* (%)	n	*Prison* (%)	n
Time 1	9	33	23	85	3.5	13	4.1	15
Time 2	6.2	19	26	79	2.6	8	4.5	14

APPENDIX B

Figure 1: Murder Rates



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports

Figure 2: Proportion of offenders

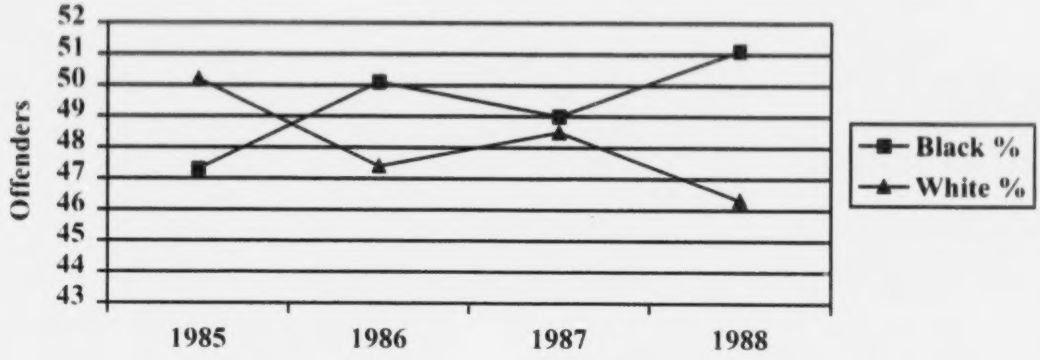


Figure 3: Violent crime rates

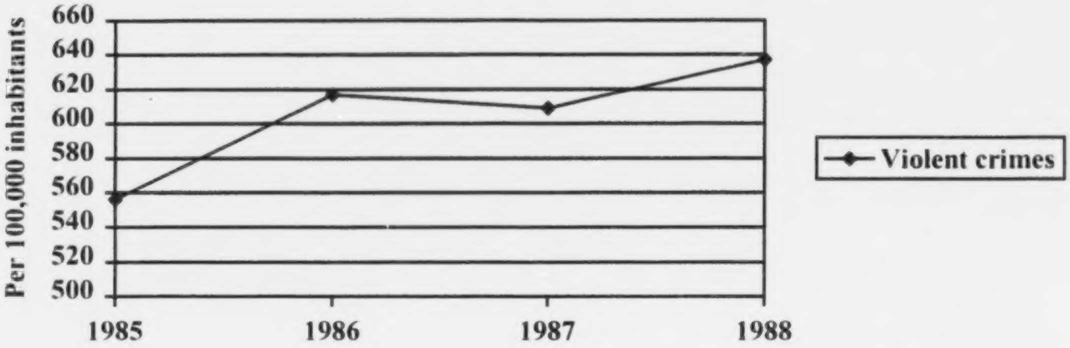
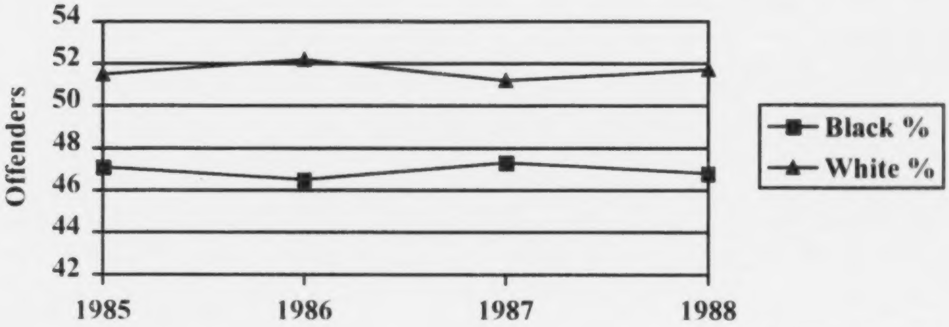


Figure 4: Proportion of violent offenders*



*Based on arrests

REFERENCES

Althaus, Scott, Edy, Jill, Entman, Robert, and Phalen, Patricia (1996). Revising the Indexing Hypothesis: Officials, Media, and the Libya Crisis. *Political Communication*, v. 13, pp. 407-421.

Ansolabehere, Stephen, Behr, Roy, and Iyengar, Shanto (1991). Media Media and Elections: An Overview. *American Politics Quarterly*, v. 19, pp. 109-139.

Bennett, W. Lance (1990). Toward a Theory of Press-State Relations in the United States. *Journal of Communication*, v. 40, pp. 103-125.

Bennett, W. Lance and Lawrence, Regina (1995). News Icons and the Mainstreaming of Social Change. *Journal of Communication*, v. 45, pp. 20-39.

Butterfield, Fox (1997a). Serious Crime Has Declined For Fifth Year, FBI Says. The *New York Times* (October 5), p. 32.

Butterfield, Fox (1997b). Property Crimes Steadily Decline, Led by Burglary. The *New York Times* (October 12), pp. 1, 26.

Butterfield, Fox (1997c). Number of Victims of Crime Fell Again in '96, Study Says. The *New York Times* (November 16), p. 18.

Campbell, Richard (1991). *60 Minutes and the News: A Mythology for Middle America*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Chermak, Steven (1994). Crime in the News Media: A Refined Understanding of How Crimes Become News. In Gregg Barak (Ed.), *Media, Process, and the Social Construction of Crime* (95-129). New York: Garland Publishing.

Chermak, Steven (1995). *Victims in the News: Crime and the American News Media*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Chibnall, Steve (1977). *Law-and-Order News: An Analysis of Crime Reporting in the British Press*. London: Tavistock Publications.

Cook, Timothy (1989). *Making Laws and Making News: Media Strategies in the U.S. House of Representatives*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Cook, Timothy (1998). *Governing with the News: The News Media as a Political Institution*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Cooper, Michael (1998). Police Say Subway Crime Was Undercounted by 20 Percent. The *New York Times* (January 8), p. B3.

Cramer, Richard (1992). *What it Takes: The Way to the White House*. New York: Random House.

Crouse, Timothy (1973). *The Boys on the Bus*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Dahl, Megan and Bennett, W. Lance (1996). Media Agency and the Use of Icons in the Agenda-Setting Process: News Representations of George Bush's Trade Mission to Japan. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, v. 1, pp. 41-59.

Doppelt, Jack and Manikas, Peter (1990). Mass Media and Criminal Justice Decision Making. In Ray Surette (Ed.), *The Media and Criminal Justice Policy* (129-142). Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

Dorman, William and Livingston, Steven (1994). News and Historical Content: The Establishing Phase of the Persian Gulf Policy Debate. In W. Lance Bennett and David Paletz (Eds.), *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (63-81). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Entman, Robert (1990). Modern Racism and the Images of Blacks in Local Television News. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, v. 7, pp. 332-345.

Entman, Robert and Page, Benjamin (1994). The News Before the Storm: The Iraq War Debate and the Limits to Media Independence. In W. Lance Bennett and David Paletz (Eds.), *Taken by Storm: The Media, Public Opinion, and US Foreign Policy in the Gulf War* (82-101). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Epstein, Edward Jay (1973). *News from Nowhere*. New York: Vintage Books.

Ericson, Richard, Baranek, Patricia, and Chan, Janet (1987). *Visualizing Deviance: A Study of the News Organization*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ericson, Richard, Baranek, Patricia, and Chan, Janet (1991). *Negotiating Control: A Study of News Sources*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Fishman, Mark (1978). Crime Waves as Ideology. *Social Problems*, v. 25, pp. 531-543.

Gamson, William and Modigliani, Andre (1987). The Changing Culture of Affirmative Action. In Richard Braungart (Ed.), *Research in Political Sociology*, v. 3, pp. 137-177. Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, Inc.

Gans, Herbert (1979). *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time*. New York: Vintage Books.

Garofalo, James (1981). Crime and the Mass Media: A Selective Review of Research. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, v. 17, pp. 319-350.

Gilliam, Franklin, Iyengar, Shanto, Simon, Adam, and Wright, Oliver (1996). Crime in Black and White: The Violent, Scary World of Local News. *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, v. 1, 6-23.

Graber, Doris (1980). *Crime News and the Public*. NY: Praeger.

Jaehnig, Walter, Weaver, David, and Fico, Frederick (1981). *Journal of Communication*, v. 31, pp. 88-96.

Jerin, Robert and Fields, Charles (1994). Murder and Mayhem in USA Today. In Gregg Barak (Ed.), *Media, Process, and the Social Construction of Crime (*187-202). NY: Garland Publishing.

Katz, Jack (1980). The Social Movement against White Collar Crime. In Egon Bittner and Sheldon Messinger (Eds.), *Criminology Review Yearbook*, Vol. 2 (161-184). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Kinder, Donald and Sanders, Lynn (1996). *Divided by Color: Racial Politics and Democratic Ideals*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lawrence, Regina (1996). Accidents, Icons, and Indexing: The Dynamics of News Coverage of Police Use of Force. *Political Communication*, v. 13, pp. 437-454.

Liebes, Tamar (1992). Comparing the Intifadeh and the Gulf War on U.S. and Israeli Television. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, v. 9, 44-55.

Linsky, Martin (1986). *Impact: How the Press Affects Federal Policymaking*. New York: WW Norton & Company.

Lotz, Roy Edward (1991). *Crime and the American Press*. New York: Praeger

Media Monitor (1997, August 12). In 1990s TV News Turns to Violence and Show Biz. Washington, DC: Center for Media and Public Affairs.

Mendelberg, Tali (1997). Executing Hortons: Racial Crime in the 1988 Presidential Campaign. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, v. 61, pp. 134-157.

Patterson, Thomas and Davis, Richard (1985). The Media Campaign: Struggle for the Agenda. In Michael Nelson (Ed.), *The Elections of 1984* (111-127). Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Randall, Donna, Lee-Simmons, Lynette, and Hagner, Paul (1988). Common versus elite crime coverage in network news. *Social Science Quarterly*, v. 69, pp. 910-929.

Rashbaum, William and Marzulli, John (1998). Safir Subways? Not Exactly. The *New York Daily News* (January 8), p. 2.

Reese, Stephen and Buckalew, Bob (1995). The Militarism of Local Television: The Routine Framing of the Persian Gulf War. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, v. 12, pp. 40-59.

Roshier, Bob (1973) The Selection of Crime News by the Press. In Stanley Cohen and Jock Young (Eds.), *The Manufacture of News* (28-39). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Schlesinger, Philip and Tumber, Howard (1994). *Reporting Crime: The Media Politics of Criminal Justice*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Simon, Roger (1990). *Road Show*. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux.

Skidmore, Paula (1995). Telling Tales: Media Power, Ideology, and the Reporting of Child Sexual Abuse in Britain. In David Kidd-Hewitt and Richard Osborne (Eds.), *Crime and the Media*. London: Pluto Press.

Skogan, Wesley and Maxfield, Michael (1981). *Coping with Crime*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Slass, Lorie Beth (1990). *A Changing Symbol: Willie Horton and the 1988 Presidential Campaign*. Master's thesis. The Annenberg School for Communication. Philadelphia, PA: The University of Pennsylvania.

Solomon, William (1992). News Frames and Media Packages: Covering El Salvador. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, v. 9, pp. 56-74.

Surette, Ray (1992). *Media, Crime, and Criminal Justice*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Co.

Surette, Ray (1994). Predator Criminals as Media Icons. In Gregg Barak (Ed.), *Media, Process, and the Social Construction of Crime* (131-158). New York: Garland Publishing.

Tuchman, Gaye (1972). Objectivity as a Strategic Ritual: An Examination of Newsmen's Notions of Objectivity. *American Journal of Sociology*, v. 77, pp. 660-678.

Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 1985 (1986, July 27). United States Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 1986 (1987, July 25). United States Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 1987 (1988, July 10). United States Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States 1988 (1989, August 6). United States Department of Justice. Washington, DC.

Constructing International Spectacle on Television:

CCTV News and China's Window on the World, 1992-1996

Tsan-Kuo Chang

201 Murphy Hall
School of Journalism and Mass Communication
University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
Minneapolis, MN 55455
(612) 626-7754
E-mail: chang003@tc.umn.edu

Chen Yanru

School of Communication Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Singapore 639798

Paper presented to Radio-Television Journalism Division of the 1998 annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Baltimore, MD, August 5-8, 1998.

Tsan-Kuo Chang is an associate professor in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities. Chen Yanru is a doctoral candidate in the School of Communication Studies at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore, where Chang served as a senior fellow in 1996-97. The authors wish to thank the School of Communication Studies at NTU for its administrative support.

Part of the 1992 data is based on a larger research project sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency. The conclusions and interpretations presented in the paper do not represent the views of USIA or of the U.S. Government.

Constructing International Spectacle on Television:

CCTV News and China's Window on the World, 1992-1996

As the last Communist stronghold since the demise of Communism in the former Soviet Union in 1991 and the rising superpower with the world's largest population, China represents an intriguing country of political, economic, social, and cultural intricacy and complexity. How it acts and reacts to the ebb and flow of world events or issues often defies conventional wisdom and common understanding in both academic and journalistic communities beyond its own geopolitical sphere. For the first three decades after its founding in 1949, as an object of international communication research, China's mass communication structure and processes had been looked at within the propaganda and persuasion model against the backdrop of the Cold War. The accepted knowledge is that, given the rigid centralized command system, the Chinese mass media essentially served as the mouthpiece of the state in general and the Communist Party in particular. As such, they were structurally situated and ideologically required to promote a worldview and the state power dictated by the logic of class struggle and revolutionary imperative in a totalitarian system. This background belief in the literature left us with the idea that the structure of total control and mass indoctrination in China was made once and for all. The reality, however, is that it wasn't.

Using the perspective of social construction of reality as a framework, the purpose of this paper is threefold: First, to examine the form and content of China's window on the world in different settings (foreign news vs. foreign policy news); second, to determine the changes, if any, of its reporting of international spectacle over time; and third, to identify the fundamental pattern of its worldview through an analysis of network of countries that have persistently attracted China's news attention and are presented accordingly.

Since China adopted the late Deng Xiaoping's economic reform policy and opened its door to the West in the late 1970s, the country has increasingly redefined and repositioned itself vis-à-vis the world at large in political, social, economic, and cultural dimensions. Even after the 1989 Tiananmen Square incident in Beijing in which a pro-democracy student movement was brutally crushed by force, China has continued on the established trajectory to both restructure its internal infrastructure, including the mass media industry, and pursue external relations through a variety of bold initiatives at high levels in recent years. Chinese President Jiang Zeming's summit meeting with President Clinton in the White House in November 1997 clearly culminated China's efforts to seek recognition and support of its domestic and foreign behaviors in the community of nations. The release and exile of the most known Chinese dissident Wei Jingsheng to the United States about two weeks after the Jiang-Clinton meeting unequivocally further underscored China's interactive strategy and communication skills in response to the international pressures on its human rights record.

The Chinese policy commitment and practices in the international arena suggest that a broader theoretical framework and a longitudinal methodological approach are needed to unravel the changing structure and processes of socio-cultural and political-economic phenomenon in China, especially the shifting use of mass media from ideological necessity to market pragmatism over the past decade (e.g., Lee, 1980; Wang & Chang, 1996). Earlier studies on Chinese mass communication since the 1950s and through the 1970s had been informed by a structural and functional perspective—the mass propaganda and persuasion model—that had considered China's mass media as the quintessential part of the ideological state apparatus firmly controlled by the central authority (e.g., Houn, 1961; Liu, 1971; Schurmann, 1966; Yu, 1964). A quick glance of the titles of these previous works, except for Houn's study, would clearly indicate a common thread underpinning their ideological focus on the country—the identification of China as "Communist," a practice of condensational symbolism that was consistent with that in the news and official policy thinking before Sino-American normalization (e.g., Chang, 1993). The use of this symbol was more than rhetorical and had policy implications.

Notwithstanding the symbolic undertone, for the first three decades since the People's Republic of China was founded, the accepted knowledge and background belief about the Chinese mass media often characterized them as "limited outlets, a centralized hierarchical organizational structure, a unified circulation system, and an invariable content" (Wang & Chang, 1996, p. 197). The persistent view appeared to imply that the form and content of Chinese mass media would remain unchanged and unchanging even if the world at large had witnessed rapid social changes. At a time when China was about to embark on its ambitious economic reform and open-door policy movement that has gradually picked up momentum ever since, such a strong background belief probably led Pye to argue that "any study of the spirit and practice of governance in China today must still take into account the fundamental findings" of earlier studies "on how the Chinese use the radio and the press to propagandize their goals and change the attitudes of their people" (1978, p. 221, emphasis added).

This line of thinking, while consonant with the behavior of a militant and revolutionary China within the Cold War framework, failed to leave room for the reality that has yet to come, particularly the emergence of China's "four modernizations" campaign in the late 1970s that set the economic reform in motion, leading eventually to a journalistic reform (e.g., Polumbaum, 1990). Although skepticism abound (for a discussion, see Huang, 1995), a growing body of empirical evidence in recent years has pointed out the changing structure and increasing potential in China's mass communication development. These changes included, but are not necessarily limited to, the following phenomena: professionalism in the Chinese journalism and mass communication education and staff training (e.g., Greenberg & Lau, 1990; Hao & Xu, 1997), decentralization in organization control and production (e.g., White, 1990; Yu, 1990), content variation in both print and broadcast media (e.g., Chang, Chen & Zhang, 1993; Wang & Chang, 1996), de-politicization of messages (e.g., Lee, 1994), internationalization of media relations and cultural practices (e.g., Chan, 1994; Hong, 1993, 1997), and market and audience orientation (e.g., Chu & Ju, 1992; He, in press; Lull, 1991; Zhang, 1993).

In short, China's economic restructuring and policy reconfiguration have inevitably generated media reform in almost every aspect of the industry at a pace that was unthinkable during or before the Cultural Revolution (e.g., Chu, 1994). To look at the changing phenomena in China today "through a narrow theoretical telescope designed years ago," as Chang and his associates indicated (1993, p. 192), "is to miss the opportunity for a better understanding of the larger picture or 'the widest range of opportunities for theory building.'" Echoing their call for broader conceptual and methodological approaches to the study of Chinese mass media, Huang (1995, p. 68) argued that as far as China's prospects were concerned, "the current wide gap between conventional wisdom and hard evidence" required "a more balanced and level-headed view." This is not simply a matter of academic debate. In news reporting, the "old constructs" on China have also been deemed inadequate in that the unpredictable society needs "a flexible and sophisticated journalistic perspective" (Tefft, 1993, p. 62). Such narrow intellectual and professional range of vision of the Chinese society has long been considered to be "rooted not in China but in the United States" (Harding, 1984, p. 307). "The very first step" toward a better conceptualization, according to Huang (1995, p. 68), "should be to throw out much of our conventional wisdom." Epistemologically, a paradigm shift therefore is in order. It does not, however, imply condoning the state control over media ownership or the government's continuing effort to curtail press freedom in China.

This paper is a modest attempt to go beyond the traditional, ideological perspective on the spirit and practices of China's mass media by examining its national television news through a longitudinal design within a sociological framework. The point of theoretical departure is the sociology of knowledge approach (e.g., Berger & Luckmann, 1966), the essence of which—social construction of reality—has increasingly been applied in the field of mass communication research (e.g., Adoni &

Mane, 1984; Chang, Wang & Chen, 1994; Cohen, Adoni & Bantz, 1990; Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes & Sasson, 1992; Neuman, Just & Crigler, 1992). Although the evidence may still be sketchy, the studies of sociology of news and knowledge have provided challenging and penetrating insights into the interplay among social communication, public knowledge and everyday life.

The News and Social Reality as Constructed Spectacle

The perspective of social construction of reality views news as essentially a form of knowledge that is necessary for any given society, whether democratic or authoritarian, to operate efficiently and effectively. The idea of news as a form of social knowledge has long been recognized by sociologists. In his seminal work, Park (1955) argued convincingly that, because news is based on "fact that has been checked, tagged, regimented, and finally ranged in this and that perspective, according to the purpose and point of view of the investigator" (p. 74, emphasis added), its function "is to orient man and society in an actual world" (p. 86). More recently, Edelman (1992, p. 24) suggested that "there can be no world of events distinct from the interpretations of observers." Consequently, "news reports divert attention from immediate experience and help focus it upon a constructed reality" (Edelman, 1988, p. 101).

If the immediate reality about the nation and society is largely delimited by a set of enduring values in the domestic news, as Gans (1979) has documented, it should be more so in foreign and international news when the setting is remote and undoubtedly beyond direct observation or experience for most people. In many situations, events or issues that occur outside a country's territorial boundaries often come to the public not as events or issues per se, but as news stories of those events or issues reported in the mass media, especially on television. From the event itself to the report of the event in the news (e.g., Rosengren, 1970), the process moves from the reality out there to the mediated reality in the mass media through a number of gatekeeping mechanisms, producing an end result that is mostly determined by the interaction between "objective" reality and a society's own pragmatic needs and social concerns (e.g., Cohen, Adoni & Bantz, 1990).

Numerous studies have shown how various factors at both the micro and macro levels help contribute to the selection and presentation of news in the mass media. One common agreement is that news is culturally bound and socially constructed for public consumption and social integration (e.g., Shoemaker & Reese, 1991). It is culturally bound because news, like other forms of knowledge (e.g., Bernstein, 1976), tends to be organized by an ethnocentric system of values, such as relevance, familiarity or psychological proximity. It is socially constructed because news, as a way of seeing and charting about the social world (e.g., Gitlin, 1980), cannot be detached from the confines of the larger social structure in which the mass media locate themselves and practice their trade in accordance with the operational logic of their position (e.g., Ball-Rokeach & Cantor, 1986; Roshco, 1975). At the collective level, a society's fundamental worldview therefore is best captured and reproduced in the news or what Boulding (1956) called its "social transcript." For Edelman (1988, p. 4), news reporting is a way of "world making." As such, "it is not what can be seen that shapes political action and support, but what must be supposed, assumed, or constructed" (Edelman, 1988, p. 105). News can never be the way it is; it is chosen to be as stories or narratives.

Given its "world-making" capacity in the international arena, the mass media allow members of a society to understand their national position in relation to that of other countries and to act accordingly based on what and how the news constructs the reality beyond its immediate horizon in the first place. These pictures in our head (Lippmann, 1922), either individually or collectively, often represent a source of private perception and imagination and may evoke public identification and expectation about the object involved. To paraphrase Edelman (1988), it is not facts or observations, but the construction of international spectacle in the news, that are critical in defining and constituting the political world for the audiences. As a major stock of social knowledge in China (e.g., Chang, Wang & Chen, 1994), there should be little doubt that the Chinese mass media would construct the world as international spectacles, providing internal interpretation to orient the people and society toward the external reality at large. How these snapshots of the world landscape are selected and presented in the news, especially on television, should help identify the dynamics of China's mass communication structure and processes at the international level.

Television as China's Window on the World

Following the footstep of rapid economic reform movement, the dramatic growth of television in China since the early 1980s has been considered to be "the single most important cultural and political development" after the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 (Lull, 1991, p. 59). The numbers of television stations, transmission and relay stations as well as the population coverage rate are indeed impressive. In 1985, China had 202 television stations. By the end of 1995, the number was more than quadrupled, with 837 TV stations at national, provincial, municipal, and county levels. Television reached 45 percent of the Chinese population in 1978 and increased its coverage rate to nearly 85 percent 20 years later, with an audience of one billion. In 1995, all TV stations in China produced 2,739 news programs with a total of 80,799 hours, representing a 10-times increase from 7,444 hours in 1985 (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 1996). The significance of news programs on Chinese television lies in the fact that the news hours far outnumbered those of educational programs (11,630 hours) by almost 7 to 1 ratio in 1995.

The development of Chinese television is often characterized by the idea of "Three One Thousands"—one thousand TV stations over the air (more than 970 to be exact), one thousand cable stations (more than 1,200), and one thousand educational stations (Zhang, 1995). With its four channels, China Central Television (CCTV) stands as the national network, commanding a strong viewership around the country. The time slot immediately after the 7 o'clock news, for example, charges the highest advertising rate on Chinese television. In recent years, CCTV added several noon-hour news program and magazine type shows: "Focal Point," "Oriental Time and Space," and "News 30 Minutes." Because of their timeliness and investigative reports, these programs have enjoyed great success since their inception. Notwithstanding, the CCTV Network News remains the authoritative source of national and international news. The long-term plan of CCTV is "to develop conglomerate operations" and to become "a first class international TV station by 2,000" (*CCTV TV Guide*, June 9, 1997, p. 1). Its international effort can be best seen in the handover of Hong Kong from the British rule to the Chinese sovereignty on June 30, 1997. CCTV dispatched a total of 339 journalists (289 in Hong Kong and 50 in major international cities) to cover live the ceremony, the first time in CCTV's history for a single event to involve so many reporters, not to mention five to six hundred more staff members in Beijing (*CCTV TV Guide*, June 9, 1997, p. 1).

The quantitative change in the distribution of Chinese television means more than a statistical count. It is clearly accompanied by a qualitative shift in its content production and presentation. One such indication is what Chan (1994) called "media internationalization" in China, a diffusion phenomenon that in recent years has witnessed Chinese television becoming more international in its programming format and geographical survey (Hong, 1993; Wang & Chang, 1996). For example, Wang & Chang (1996) have documented how China's TV programming and foreign imports evolved from a fixed program (movies) in a few select socialist countries (e.g., former Soviet Union and North Korea) in the 1970s to various programs (e.g., movies, documentary, TV series, children, information, drama, and sports) from a number of capitalist countries such as Japan, Taiwan, United States, United Kingdom, and West Germany in 1990.

What is more telling perhaps is that the trend of structural transformation in Chinese television programming did not seem to be affected by the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown. As far as Chinese television is concerned, "from the central station to the regional ones, overseas programs continued to be scheduled, with an increasing use of a wider variety of programming from non-Communist countries" (Wang & Chang, 1996, p. 206). While there may be some tensions in the process (Chan, 1994), the general conclusion reached in recent studies (e.g., Hong, 1993; Li, 1991; Wang & Chang, 1996) is that Chinese television will continue to serve as a window on the world, with the news standing at the forefront as a gateway to a remote reality that is far out of reach for most people in China. The key questions to ask then are, what has been sketched about the world out there in the news and how is it brought to the attention of Chinese television viewers?

If history is any guide, the only thing predictable about China's internal and external behaviors is its unpredictability. Given the dynamic and volatility of the market in economic reform and the state's avowed political interest in news control (e.g., Zhang, 1993), it is difficult to predict the form and content of Chinese national television news in the short run, let alone its long term property and prospect. It becomes more difficult to do so when China's TV news net is cast across foreign waters. For one thing, it represents an international effort to bring home spectacles for a domestic audience whose appetite may have been whetted by the gradual opening of the Chinese window on the outside world. Taking advantage of two sets of data collected over a 5-year span, the following research questions were addressed: What sector of the external reality (e.g., countries) did China's national television news consider to be salient in its survey of the world's geopolitical landscape? How did the construction of international spectacles change over time? Did the worldview of TV news shift when China's position moved away from being an observer to that of a participant? What were the issues of general concerns in Chinese television news?

Method

Two sets of actual video content of the 7 o'clock National Network News on China Central Television (CCTV) were collected in 1992 and 1996. The 1992 data included daily newscast from

June 15 to July 15, with 5 days missing, while the 1996 data started on December 7 and ended that month. Although neither sample was randomly chosen and the time frame was different, each study period was longer than that in any previous content analysis of Chinese television news. For a temporal comparison between "then and now," the roughly equivalent sample size (26 days in 1992 vs. 25 days in 1996) was seen as providing a longitudinal indicator of the contemporary worldview of Chinese national television news. As will be discussed later, the time factor can be controlled to reveal the underlying pattern of how CCTV news constructed international spectacles with respect to the countries involved.

For the purpose of this paper, two types of news stories were selected for content analysis: foreign news not involving China and foreign policy news concerning China and at least another country. This conceptual classification is important (e.g., Cohen, 1963; Davison, Shannon & Yu, 1980; Trattner, 1982) because the former presents the world landscape as seen by China without its being part of the picture whereas the latter projects China's position in the world in relation to others. "To assume that there is no difference in the views from 'here and there,'" as Chang and his associates (1993, p. 177) put it, "is to accept the conceptual implausibility that our perspectives of the world do not change according to where we may stand." Unless specified otherwise, the analysis throughout the paper follows this distinction.

Each story was the coding unit, regardless of its length. All the stories were coded by coders who were fluent in the Chinese language and understood the format of Chinese television news. To facilitate comparison over time, the coding scheme was identical in both years. Based on that used by Stevenson and Shaw (1984), the coding procedure recorded, among other things, the following elements: type of news, primary and secondary countries covered, geographical region, topic and main theme. As part of a larger project in 1992, the reliability coefficients between two independent coders (Holsti, 1969) for the variables reported in this paper were: type of news, .98; primary country involved, .96; secondary country involved, .98; geographical region, .98; topic, .89; and main theme, .90. The reliability test of a 1996 sample showed similar high coefficients, demonstrating the stability and reproducibility of the coding scheme.

Results

On CCTV, foreign policy news is a component of the domestic stories that occupy the front two-thirds of the newscast while foreign news is slated at the bottom one-third. If domestic and foreign policy news stories appear longer or more frequently, they tend to cut into the time slot reserved for foreign news. During the 26-day study period in 1992, CCTV carried 247 foreign news stories and 107 foreign policy stories, with an average of about 14 such stories per newscast. In December of 1996, the 25 days included 214 foreign news stories and 66 foreign policy stories, averaging 11 stories per lineup. The decrease in 1996 could be partly due to the increase in the number and length of domestic stories and some detailed coverage of Chinese foreign relations activities. All the stories were reported in a timely fashion and most had visual footage. In terms of average length, stories in 1992 were longer than those in 1996 in both foreign news (49.5 seconds vs. 33.7 seconds) and foreign policy news (66.4 seconds vs. 60.4 seconds). The number of countries covered was about the same in foreign news between 1992 (54) and 1996 (57), but differed significantly in foreign policy news (37 in 1992 vs. 21 in 1996). Compared over time and across news category, the world presented on CCTV was much larger in foreign news than in foreign policy news.

One major investigation of this paper is to determine which countries in the world tended to be portrayed on China's news window. Table 1 provides the comparison of CCTV coverage of primary countries/entities between the two years within the two types of news. It is evident that CCTV's news spot light often focused on a few prominent countries or entities (e.g., United States, United Nations, Russia, Israel, and Japan) in foreign news when China stood as an observer, but changed its worldview when it became involved as a participant in foreign policy news. For example, Yugoslavia (11.1%) and Russia (8.0%) followed the United States (13.3%) in the 1992 sample as the top three countries in foreign news, but dropped out the top 10 lineup in foreign policy news in the same year. A feasible explanation is that shortly after the collapse of Communism, Russia as the successor of the former Soviet Union still represented a force in that region to be reckoned with. Diplomatically speaking, however, it was probably undesirable for China to engage Russia. The situation apparently was ripe for bilateral activity five years later. In 1996, Russia (23.3%) outnumbered all other countries in foreign policy news on CCTV when the two countries exchanged high-level official visits.

Because of the two samples' different time frame, the above findings can be reasonably attributed to "seasonable" or short-term factors (e.g., China's external initiatives or a foreign country's temporary internal problems) that might have contributed to news coverage of a particular country on CCTV. In foreign policy news, for instance, the presence of Tunisia (11.2%), Ivory Coast (8.2%) and Morocco (4.1%) in 1992 and Comoro Islands (8.3%), Azerbaijan (3.3%) and Togo (3.3%) in 1996 certainly suggests the plausibility of such explanation. To eliminate the time factor and country difference due to national idiosyncrasy, it should be illuminating to look at only those countries that had been reported on CCTV in both years, thus to some extent controlling for the temporal fluctuation. From a long term point of view, this is tantamount to locating those countries to which CCTV's news antenna might be constantly turned. Table 2 reports the results.

If the data in Table 1 display the news picture of "world making" on CCTV according to the fleeting flashes or beeps of countries/entities on its news radar, the finding in Table 2 charts a regular and fixed pattern of countries/entities whose features might be counted more relevant in the Chinese environment, especially in foreign policy arena. When common coverage in both years was taken into consideration, the number of countries was cut in half from that of either year in foreign news. The United States (10.9%) led the pack of 31 countries/entities, followed by United Nations (8.5%), Russia

(7.5%), Yugoslavia (6.6%), Israel (4.6%), Palestine Liberation Organization (4.6%), Japan (4.4%), and Hong Kong (3.6%), with 23 other countries trailing off. From 1992 to 1996, the CCTV foreign news net clearly left out most of African, Southeast Asian, and Latin American countries. In foreign policy news, the CCTV net was even narrower, capturing only 11 countries/entities. Russia (9.5%) topped the two-year coverage that included Hong Kong, United States, Japan, Britain, United Nations, Bolivia, South Korea, Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam in that order.

In contrast to the foreign news, the short list in foreign policy news on CCTV constructed an international spectacle in a way that reflected either the emerging status of China as a world power or its concerns over matters closer to home. An obvious indication is that the worlds of foreign news and foreign policy news on the Chinese national television were not the same size or shape, depending mostly on where China might find itself in the scheme of things. The consistent coverage and relatively high visibility of several primary countries/entities (e.g., United States, Russia, Japan, and United Nations) on CCTV over a period of five years apart cannot easily be dismissed as coincidence. An examination of secondary countries/entities in the same story further suggests that there exists some kind of "network" among the countries reported on CCTV.

As shown in Table 3, while some countries (e.g., United States, Russia, Yugoslavia, and Japan) often became news on CCTV all by themselves, several countries or entities such as United Nations, Israel, PLO, Iran, Cuba or Moldavia probably would not be covered if they had not shared the spot light with others. For example, PLO and to some extent Israel tended to appear in a symbiotic relationship or flanked by other countries in the region. The source of connection between primary and secondary countries/entities could be rooted in international power balance (United States vs. Russia), missions of United Nations or regional conflicts (Israel vs. PLO). Such linkage seems to underscore an inter-national, rather than parochial, outlook on Chinese national television news. The "network" structure emerges in Figure 1 when countries that appeared with other countries in at least three stories either as the primary or secondary country on CCTV news in the two years combined were plotted. The cut-off threshold is arbitrarily chosen, but should minimize mere chance occurrence.

As far as foreign news on CCTV is concerned, the international spectacles centered around some key countries in North America, Western Europe, Middle East, and Eastern Europe, with the United States and United Nations dominating the attention and Russia, Germany, PLO, and Iraq each serving as magnets in their respective region. The network pattern disappears, however, when primary and secondary countries/entities were examined in foreign policy news (Table 4). The relationship between China and other countries in foreign policy news on CCTV was usually depicted on a one-to-one basis, with Russia taking the lead. In a few cases (Russia, Hong Kong, United States, and Syria), foreign policy news could be functional in that Taiwan, whose Nationalist government lost to the Communists in the Chinese civil war and fled the mainland in 1949, was brought into the equation to reaffirm China's claim of its sovereignty over the island nation. Hong Kong is another case. The upcoming transfer of sovereignty between Britain and China put the colony high on the news agenda. Such evidence offers some support to the argument that social construction of political spectacle in the news is part of the process of definition of the world (Edelman, 1988). In foreign policy news on CCTV, both Taiwan and Hong Kong were largely defined from China's point of view.

The above findings indicate differential treatment of countries/entities between foreign news and foreign policy news on CCTV from 1992 to 1996, suggesting that in the process of news reporting, China's national television took certain aspects of the world reality to be relevant and others to be irrelevant to the domestic setting. The changing worldview seems to follow the logic of the range of vision based on the functional distance between China and other countries. Individually, countries in Africa and Central and South America did not fare well in foreign news. Collectively, these regions remained obscure on CCTV. In foreign policy news, this is not necessarily the case, again showing the dual lens of Chinese television. Table 5 reports how various regions were configured on CCTV from 1992 to 1996.

In foreign news, although 10 countries in Africa were reported on CCTV during the two-year study period, their share of coverage was relatively small in each year as compared to that of countries in Eastern Europe/Russia, Middle East, North America, East Asia, or Western Europe. When China surveyed the world on its national television as an observer, Africa for the most part did not exist. So did Central and South America. Eastern Europe/Russia had the largest number of countries covered and enjoyed more coverage in both years. As a participant in international relations, China clearly had its news eyes focused on Africa and East Asia. In 1992, Africa (29.9%) and East Asia (25.3%) stood out among all regions on CCTV's window on the world. Five years later, they were outdistanced by Eastern Europe/Russia (35.7%), but still ranked among the top three regions. Like that of the individual countries, this phenomenon can be argued to be ephemeral, subject to the influence of time-bound factors delimited by the specific study period. To go beyond the short-term worldview, coverage of geographical region was reexamined based on primary countries reported in both years, thus eliminating time and country variation as contributing factors to the way of "making worlds" on China Central Television.

Related to the picture in Table 2, the data in Table 6 can be taken to delineate an extended worldview that identify the broader geopolitical areas deserving China's constant news watch. As is evident, in foreign news Eastern Europe/Russia (22.3%), where China found many of its former Communist allies, and the Middle East (21.0%), where military confrontation and political tension could be easily triggered across national borders, took a lion share of CCTV newscast, with North America (15.7%), Western Europe (14.8%) and East Asia (12.1%) sharing a similar proportion. Africa, Australia/Oceania, South America, and South Asia carved up the rest. On a per country basis, however, the region that got the most coverage on CCTV was North America, followed by Eastern Europe/Russia and East Asia.

In foreign policy arena, the priority of regions was reversed in that East Asia (34.2%) dominated the limited news window on China's international relations. Eastern Europe/Russia (19.7%) and North America (17.1%) were two other regions that saw considerably high Chinese diplomatic activities. What is more revealing is that, unlike the pattern in Table 5, Africa as a whole vanished from the overall presentation of foreign policy news. An important question to explore is, under what circumstances did these regions get covered on CCTV? Since diplomatic and governmental activities naturally constituted the thrust of foreign policy news, the analysis of foreign news should be demonstrative. Table 7 compares the news focus across seven regions that received at least three percent of the total coverage on CCTV in the two-year study period.

Within regions, except for North America and Western Europe where no particular news focus was readily discernible, each of the other five regions had something more salient in their coverage on CCTV: social unrest (40%) in Africa, Politics (48.4%) in East Asia, military/defense (33.8%) in Eastern Europe, diplomacy/government (37.1%) in Middle East, and politics (44.4%) in South Asia. Among regions, this distinction generally holds true, portraying the state of political affairs or social practices in each region. A finding that is worth noting and perhaps more telling about the construction of international spectacle on Chinese national television is the fact that CCTV devoted more stories to disasters/accidents in North American than in any other region. In juxtaposition from region to region, this presentation of negative news in the region was accompanied by the highlight of technology/science. To paraphrase Edelman (1992), these remote spectacles do not necessarily "promote accurate expectations or understanding," but rather evoke a drama that objectifies hopes and vulnerability there. In this regard, the themes on CCTV news deserve a closer look.

In this paper, the themes referred to story angles, conceptual framework and the like that were present in the news, but which might not emerge clearly from the classification of topics. They were conceived as aspects of news coverage that cut across the topics. Table 8 shows the thematic analysis. It should be apparent that themes on CCTV differed from year to year and varied from foreign news to foreign policy news. In 1992, CCTV appeared to be more concerned about religious/ethnic antagonism (18.2%) and racial issues (10.5%) in its coverage of foreign news. By 1996, the themes shifted to sovereignty (12.6%) and regional cooperation (8.4%). In foreign policy news, the emphasis was on relations with developing countries (20.6%) and economic reform (16.8%) in 1992. Five years later, similar to foreign news, the themes of sovereignty (34.8%) and regional cooperation (16.7%) became prominent. The transformation of dominant themes from issues unrelated to the question of legitimacy in the early year to national integrity and area interdependence in recent year on CCTV news seems to underline China's determination to stay in its own course even when the country was increasingly being integrated into the world's capitalist structure as a result of its economic reform and open door policy.

Conclusions and Discussion

With the possession of two data sets each covering about a 4-week period on China Central Television news during the two years under study, this paper is in a unique position to assess longitudinally how Chinese national television constructs international spectacles beyond its own national borders. Against the backdrop of social construction of reality, the point of theoretical departure is that China's on-going economic march toward market reform and social re-orientation to greater openness have led to a fundamental structural change that defies earlier mass persuasion and propaganda model. One key premise in this paper is that as a form of social knowledge, news in China molds the external reality at large through the way of "world making" that helps define the size and shape of the remote geopolitical landscape for the Chinese audiences.

Although the two samples were not randomly selected and the time frame different, both years were relatively uneventful, unlike 1997 when news was just not "average" in that President Jiang's visit to the United States and the Communist Party's 15th Congress might have prompted many pseudo-events and skewed CCTV coverage. With an expanded study period in each year, the two points in time nevertheless allow for a temporal comparative analysis between now and then. By way of analytical control, the focus on the Chinese Central Television permits better examination of the constructed reality in the news as short-term phenomenon and careful determination of more permanent worldview projected by some underlying policy concerns and social practices in China. While content analysis is obviously inadequate in demonstrating the *process* of social construction of reality, it is capable of identifying the pattern of the mediated reality as a *product* of that process. If the consistency of form and content of the constructed spectacles can be reasonably established over time, the impact of social structure on the formation of news reality should become more plausible, albeit still lacking direct evidence. This is especially true in a more controlled society like China.

Notwithstanding its improvement of material well-being and relaxation of ideological rigidity since the early 1980s, China today still stands true to the idea of Communist superiority. As shown on its national television, China's worldview can therefore be expected to be bound by its range of vision that is largely determined by the logic of its views between here and there: "here" in the sense of China as a participant of what matters in foreign policy news and "there" in the sense of China as an observer of what happens in foreign news. Either way, the international spectacles reported in the news should say as much about the reality itself as those who construct or put a limit on it. Several conclusions can be drawn from the patterns exhibited in the data.

First, the world of foreign news differs from that of foreign policy news in both quantity and quality. In the former, the news net tends to be wider and is cast farther whereas in the latter, it is narrower and does not reach far. The short-term worldview in the news is often a response either to the tension and sentiment outside China's own immediate environment or to the current policy consideration and practices within its extended internal context. In the long run, the news configuration of the world appears to hinge on a system of functional relevance or systematic typification. As such, the general pattern of the external reality sketched on China's window on the world does not seem to deviate much from what has been documented in the literature: focus on some elite nations due to perhaps the default structure of international power balance and a few hot spots as a result of regional conflict and confrontation.

Second, the seemingly large spectacle on CCTV news features only a few major international actors. While United States, Russia and, to certain extent, United Nations, clearly dominate both foreign news and foreign policy news on Chinese national television over time, it is probably their strategic location in the network structure that is more revealing. These three countries/entities not only represent strong news centers in their own right, but also become magnets linking directly or indirectly other countries from different regions in a news web. Although they do not show up alone in the CCTV newscast, many smaller and less powerful countries appear in the stories along with some "known" countries either because of their challenge to the powers that be or owing to their close alliance with them. This "foe or friend" connection has been visible throughout the newscast. In a sense, the international outlook on Chinese national TV news adds certain subtle dimension to the dynamics of the world of foreign news in China. Economically, China's national door may be wide open to the outside world. Politically for the vast majority of Chinese people who depend on television for a glimpse of that world, however, the "constructed window" on CCTV is surely limited in size and offers a much more choosy view of what lies beyond the Chinese geopolitical horizon.

Third, the survey of the world's landscape on China's national television, while factual and timely, is highly selective, taking some constant snapshots from a few countries in areas closer to home and leaving out vast regions unfocused or totally ignored. To use a dated and somewhat problematic classification, as a Second World country, China's treatment of the Third World nations is no better than that of the First World. Along with the total absence of development news about Third World countries, it is a reflection of the Chinese government's increasing pragmatism in its diplomacy. From a longitudinal viewpoint, Africa and Latin America simply do not exist on the Chinese national television. The world that China's central TV news brings to the attention of the Chinese people is one that largely lies within its sphere of influence: East and South Asia. Ethnocentrism in news reporting is thus the norm, not the exception, across national borders.

Fourth, although CCTV subscribes to news services such as Visnews for its foreign news spots, it does not identify the source in the stories. Basically CCTV translates and edits the stories for its own broadcast. In major stories it would state this practice at the end. Consequently, as far as foreign news content is concerned in China, the mechanism of news classification and typification (e.g., Tuchman, 1978) seems to be at work, offering definitions of the situation in a remote setting for the audience at home. For example, a regular viewer of CCTV would have no difficulty associating Africa with the phenomenon of social unrest or Eastern Europe/Russia and Middle East with issues of military and diplomatic nature. As to North America (essentially the United States), it seems to be more prone to natural disasters and accidents than any other region in the world.

Fifth, the news angles or conceptual framework that cuts across various stories on China Central Television is limited in scope either by commission or omission. For instance, issues of human rights or social justice are rarely addressed on the TV news while the problem of sovereignty and regional cooperation is increasingly present in recent year. It means that China as the last Communist superpower and an emerging economic power is determined to orient the Chinese society and people to aspects of its main concerns or to steer them away from issues that may make the country look bad by comparison. It could also imply that the country is more assertive in its worldview regarding what it should perceive in the social reality and how it should construe it in the process of news production. The narrow range of international spectacles gives some support to the thesis that they are constructed to help evoke a sense of priority and expectation of either action or non-action.

Last but not the least, on a conceptual and methodological note, the two worlds of CCTV news—one in foreign news and the other in foreign policy news—point out the necessity of sound conceptualization and appropriate analytical approach in international communication research. Without such differentiation between the two concepts, the nuance in the differing worldviews, as exemplified by China's national television news, may be lost. Mixing the two, at best, will cancel out each other, obscuring the true, opposite phenomena. At worst, it may result in erroneous conclusions and unwarranted interpretations of a skewed relationship between variables. If the evidence from the longitudinal data in this paper is any indication, the process of foreign news reporting and that of foreign policy news coverage in China do not necessarily originate from the same location; nor are they likely to follow the same trajectory. How each may end can be largely determined by where China wants it to be and what it may bring out along the way.

References

Ball-Rokeach, S. J. & Cantor, M. G. (Eds.), *Media, audience, and social structure*. Newbury Park: Sage Publications.

Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books.

Bernstein, R. J. (1976). *The restructuring of social and political theory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Boulding, K. E. (1956). *The image: Knowledge in life and sociology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Chan, J. M. (1994). Media internationalization in China: Processes and tensions. *Journal of Communication*, 44, 70-88.

Chang, T. K. (1993). *The news and China policy: The illusion of Sino-American relations, 1950-1984*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.

Chang, T. K.; Chen, C. H.; & Zhang, G. Q. (1993). Rethinking the mass propaganda model: Evident from the Chinese regional press. *Gazette*, 51, 173-195.

Chang, T. K.; Wang, J.; Chen, C. H. (1994). News as social knowledge in China: The changing worldview of Chinese national media. *Journal of Communication*, 44, 52-69.

China Statistical Yearbook, 1996. Beijing: China Statistical Publishing House.

Chu, G. C. & Ju. Y. A. (1992). *The Great Wall in ruins: Communication and cultural change in China*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Chu, L. L. (1994). Continuity and change in China's media reform. *Journal of Communication*, 44, 4-21.

Cohen, B. C. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Davison, W. P.; Shannon, D. R.; & Yu, F. T. C. (1980). *News from abroad and the foreign policy public*. HEADLINE series 250. New York: Foreign Policy Association.

Edelman, M. (1988). *Constructing the political spectacle*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Edelman, M. (1992). Constructing the political spectacle. *Kettering Review*, 24-29.

Gans, H. (1979). *Deciding what's news: A study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek and Time*. New York: Vintage Books.

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Greenberg, B. S. & Lau, T. Y. (1990). The revolution in journalism and communication education in the People's Republic of China. *Gazette*, 45, 19-31.

Hao, X. & Xu, X. (1997). Exploring between two worlds: China's journalism education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, 52, 35-47.

Harding, H. (1984). The study of Chinese politics: Toward a third generation of scholarship. *World Politics*, 35, 284-307.

He, Z. (in press). Chinese Communist party press in a tug of war: A political-economic analysis of the Shenzhen Special Zone Daily. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Power, money, and the media: Communication patterns in greater China*.

Holsti, O. R. (1969). *Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.

Hong, J. (1993). China's TV program import 1958-1988: Towards the internationalization of television? *Gazette*, 52, 1-23.

Hong, J. (1997). Cultural relations between China and Taiwan. *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, 3, 1-25.

Houn, F. (1961). *To change a nation*. New York: Free Press.

Huang, Y. (1995). Why China will not collapse. *Foreign Policy*, No. 99, 54-68.

Lee, C. C. (1980). *Media imperialism reconsidered: The homogenizing of television culture*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Lee, C. C. (1994). Ambiguities and contradictions: Issues in China's changing political communication. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *China's media, media's China*. Oxford: Westview Press.

Li, X. P. (1991). The Chinese television system and television news. *China Quarterly*, 126, 340-355.

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion*. New York: The Free Press.

Liu, A. P. L. (1971). *Communications and national integration in Communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Lull, J. (1991). *China turned on: Television, reform, and resistance*. London: Routledge.

Park, R. E. (1955). *Society: Collective behavior, news and opinion, sociology and modern society*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press.

Polumbaum, J. (1990). The tribulations of China's journalists after a decade of reform. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Voices of China: The interplay of politics and journalism* (pp. 33-68). New York: The Guilford Press.

Pye, L. W. (1978). Communications and Chinese political culture. *Asian Survey*, 28, 221-246.

Rosengren, K. E. (1970). International news: Intra and extra media data. *Acta Sociologica*, 13, 96-109.

Roshco, B. (1975). *Newsmaking*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Schurmann, F. (1966). *Ideology and organization in Communist China*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Shoemaker, P. J. & Reese, S. D. (1991). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content*. New York: Longman.

Stevenson, R. L. & Shaw, D. L. (Eds.). (1984). *Foreign news and the new world information order*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University.

Tefft, S. (1993). In Beijing, Communism besieged. *Media Studies Journal*, 7, 59-64.

Trattner, J. H. (1982). Reporting foreign affairs. *Washington Quarterly*, 5, 103-111.

Tuchman, G. (1978). *Making news: A study in the construction of reality*. New York: The Free Press.

Wang, J. & Chang, T. K. (1996). From class ideologue to state manager: TV programming and foreign imports in China, 1970-1990. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 40, 196-207.

White, L. T., III. (1990). All the news: structure and politics in Shanghai's reform media. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Voices of China: The interplay of politics and journalism* (pp. 88-110). New York: The Guilford Press.

Yu, F. T. C. (1964). *Mass persuasion in Communist China*. New York: Frederick A. Praeger.

Yu, J. (1990). The structure and function of Chinese television, 1979-1989. In C. C. Lee (Ed.), *Voices of China: The interplay of politics and journalism* (pp. 69-87). New York: The Guilford Press.

Zhang, X. (1993). The market versus the state: The Chinese press since Tiananmen. *Journal of International Affairs*, 47, 195-221.

Zhang, X. (1995). Radio, television and video industry. In Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press, *The state and trend of development in China, 1995-1996* (pp. 256-315). Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Press.

Table 1: Top Countries/Entities Covered on CCTV, 1992-96*

Foreign News+				Foreign Policy News#			
1992	%	1996	%	1992	%	1996	%
United States	13.3	United Nations	11.2	Tunisia	11.2	Russia	23.3
Yugoslavia	11.1	PLO	8.6	Hong Kong	9.2	Comoro Is.	8.3
Russia	8.0	United States	8.0	Ivory Coast	8.2	Hong Kong	8.3
United Nations	6.2	Russia	7.0	United States	8.2	United States	8.3
Britain	4.9	Hong Kong	5.9	Japan	6.1	Syria	6.7
South Africa	4.4	Israel	5.9	Armenia	5.1	United Nations	6.7
France	3.6	Japan	5.9	Taiwan	5.1	Britain	5.0
Germany	3.6	Iran	4.3	Cambodia	4.1	Hungary	5.0
Israel	3.6	Iraq	3.7	Morocco	4.1	Japan	5.0
Japan	3.1	Egypt	2.1	Britain	4.1	Azerbaijan	3.3
Australia	2.2					Togo	3.3
Czechoslovakia	2.2						
42 countries	33.8	47 countries	41.6	27 countries	34.6	10 countries	16.8
N =	225		187		98		60

* Entries include only primary countries that received more than two percents of total coverage in either foreign news or foreign policy news on CCTV.

+ Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China.

# Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country.

Table 2: Countries/Entities Covered on CCTV from 1992 to 1996*

Foreign News+		Foreign Policy News#	
Country	Percent	Country	Percent
United States	10.9%	Russia	9.5%
United Nations	8.5	Hong Kong	8.9
Russia	7.5	United States	8.2
Yugoslavia	6.6	Japan	5.7
Israel	4.6	Britain	4.4
PLO	4.6	United Nations	3.8
Japan	4.4	Bolivia	1.9
Hong Kong	3.6	South Korea	1.9
Britain	2.9	Philippines	1.3
Germany	2.7	Thailand	1.3
South Africa	2.7	Vietnam	1.3
France	2.4		
Iran	2.2		
Iraq	1.9		
Australia	1.5		
Czechoslovakia	1.5		
India	1.5		
Italy	1.2		
Turkey	1.2		
Afghanistan	1.0		
Colombia	1.0		
Lebanon	1.0		
Philippines	1.0		
South Korea	1.0		
Tajkistan	1.0		
N =	412		158

* Entries include only primary countries that received coverage in both 1992 and 1996 in either foreign news or foreign policy news on CCTV, thus eliminating time factor and country difference. Percentage represents total coverage of the two years combined.

+ Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China. The following countries received less than one percent of total coverage: Canada, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Thailand.

# Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country.

Table 3: Primary and Secondary Countries/Entities in Foreign News on CCTV, 1992-96*

Primary	Secondary	Frequency	Other Countries
United States (45)	-	29	Egypt, Germany, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Panama, Poland
	Russia	3	
	Yugoslavia	3	
	8 countries	10	
United Nations (35)	-	7	Cyprus, Iraq, Rwanda, Tanzania, United States, Zaire, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldavia, Bosnia-Herzegovina
	Yugoslavia	9	
	Ghana	5	
	10 countries	14	
Russia (31)	-	20	Germany, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Moldavia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan
	United States	4	
	6 countries	7	
Yugoslavia (27)	-	18	United States
	United Nations	7	
	1 country	2	
Israel (19)	-	2	Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria
	PLO	11	
	4 countries	6	
PLO (19)	Israel	15	Egypt, Lebanon, United States
	3 countries	4	
Japan (18)	-	13	South Korea, Russia
	United States	3	
	2 countries	2	
Iran (9)	-	2	Iraq, United States, Russia
	Turkey	3	
	3 countries	4	
Cuba (3)	United States	3	
Moldavia (3)	Russia	3	

* Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China. Entries include primary and secondary countries that appeared in at least three stories together in the two years combined. Absence of secondary countries means the country appeared alone in the news.

Table 4: Primary and Secondary Countries/Entities in Foreign Policy News on CCTV, 1992-96*

Primary	Secondary	Frequency	Other Countries
Russia (15)	-	14	Taiwan
	1 country	1	
Hong Kong (14)	-	9	Britain, Russia, Taiwan
	3 countries	5	
United States (13)	-	10	North Korea, Taiwan, Yugoslavia
	3 countries	3	
Tunisia (11)	-	9	Saudi Arabia, PLO
	2 countries	2	
Japan (9)	-	9	
Ivory Coast (8)	-	7	Morocco
	1 country	1	
Britain (7)	-	3	Japan, Hong Kong
	2 countries/entities	4	
United Nations (6)	-	4	Brazil, Egypt
	2 countries	2	
Armenia (5)	-	5	
Comoro Island (5)	-	5	
Taiwan (5)	-	2	Philippines, Hong Kong
	2 countries/entities	3	
Cambodia (4)	-	3	Japan
	1 country	1	
Morocco (4)	-	2	Tunisia, United Arab Emirates
	2 countries	2	
Syria (4)	-	2	Taiwan
	1 country	2	

* Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country. Entries include primary countries that appeared in at least four stories in the two years combined. Absence of secondary countries means the country appeared alone in the news.

Table 5: Geographical Regions Covered on CCTV, 1992-96*

	Foreign News+			Foreign Policy News#		
	1992	1996	Number of Countries@	1992	1996	Number of Countries
Africa	10.3%	5.6%	10	29.9%	21.4%	11
Australia/Oceania	3.0	2.1	3	3.4	-	2
Central America	-	-	1	-	2.4	1
East Asia	4.8	18.2	7	25.3	19.0	5
E. Europe/Russia	32.7	11.9	17	9.2	35.7	5
Middle East	8.5	35.7	11	-	4.8	1
North America	12.7	7.0	2	6.9	9.5	1
South America	1.2	0.7	3	4.6	2.4	3
South Asia	7.9	10.5	11	10.3	4.8	8
Western Europe	18.8	8.4	12	10.3	-	9
N =	165	143	77	87	42	46

* Entries are based on primary countries covered in either foreign news or foreign policy news. Stories that involved United Nations, secondary countries and countries from different regions were excluded. Because of rounding, percentage total does not add up to 100.

+ Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China.

# Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country.

@ Figures represent primary countries covered at least once in either foreign news or foreign policy news of the two years combined.

Table 6: Coverage of Geographical Regions on CCTV in Both Years*

	Foreign News+		Foreign Policy News#	
	Number of countries	Percent	Number of Countries	Percent
Africa	1	3.6%	-	-%
Australia/Oceania	1	2.0	-	-
Central America	-	-	-	-
East Asia	3	12.1	3	34.2
E. Europe/Russia	4	22.3	1	19.7
Middle East	7	21.0	-	-
North America	2	15.7	1	17.1
South America	1	1.3	1	3.9
South Asia	5	6.6	3	7.9
Western Europe	7	14.8	1	9.2
N =	31	305	10	76

* Entries are based on primary countries that were covered in both years, thus eliminating time and country variation as contributing factors in coverage of geographical regions. Stories that involved United Nations and secondary countries were excluded. Because of rounding, percentage total does not add up to 100.

+ Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China.

# Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country.

Table 7: Regions and Foreign News Focus on CCTV, 1992-1996*

	Regions						
News Focus	Africa	East Asia	Eastern Europe	Middle East	North America	South Asia	Western Europe
Diplomacy/government	8.0%	6.5%	13.2%	37.1%	-	11.1%	14.3%
Military/defense	12.0	9.7	33.8	22.6	10.0	18.5	7.1
Economic/trade/business	-	6.5	11.8	9.7	16.7	3.7	7.1
Education/arts/culture	-	9.7	-	1.6	-	3.7	4.8
Technology/science	-	3.2	1.5	-	16.7	-	2.4
Transportation/tourism	-	-	-	1.6	3.3	-	2.4
Social unrest	40.0	-	5.9	9.7	6.7	-	7.1
Agriculture/forest	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.8
Social service/health	-	3.2	2.9	-	6.7	3.7	4.8
Sports	4.0	6.5	1.5	3.2	3.3	-	11.9
Politics	28.0	48.4	25.0	12.9	6.7	44.4	11.9
Human interest/life style	-	-	1.5	-	3.3	-	4.8
Disasters/accidents	-	6.5	2.9	1.6	16.7	14.8	2.4
Crime/law	4.0	-	-	-	10.0	-	7.1
Ecology/environment	4.0	-	-	-	-	-	7.1
N =	25	31	68	62	30	27	42

* Entries include regions that received at least 3 percent of total coverage on CCTV in the two years combined, excluding Australia/New Zealand/Oceania and South America.

Table 8: Main Themes of News on CCTV, 1992-96*

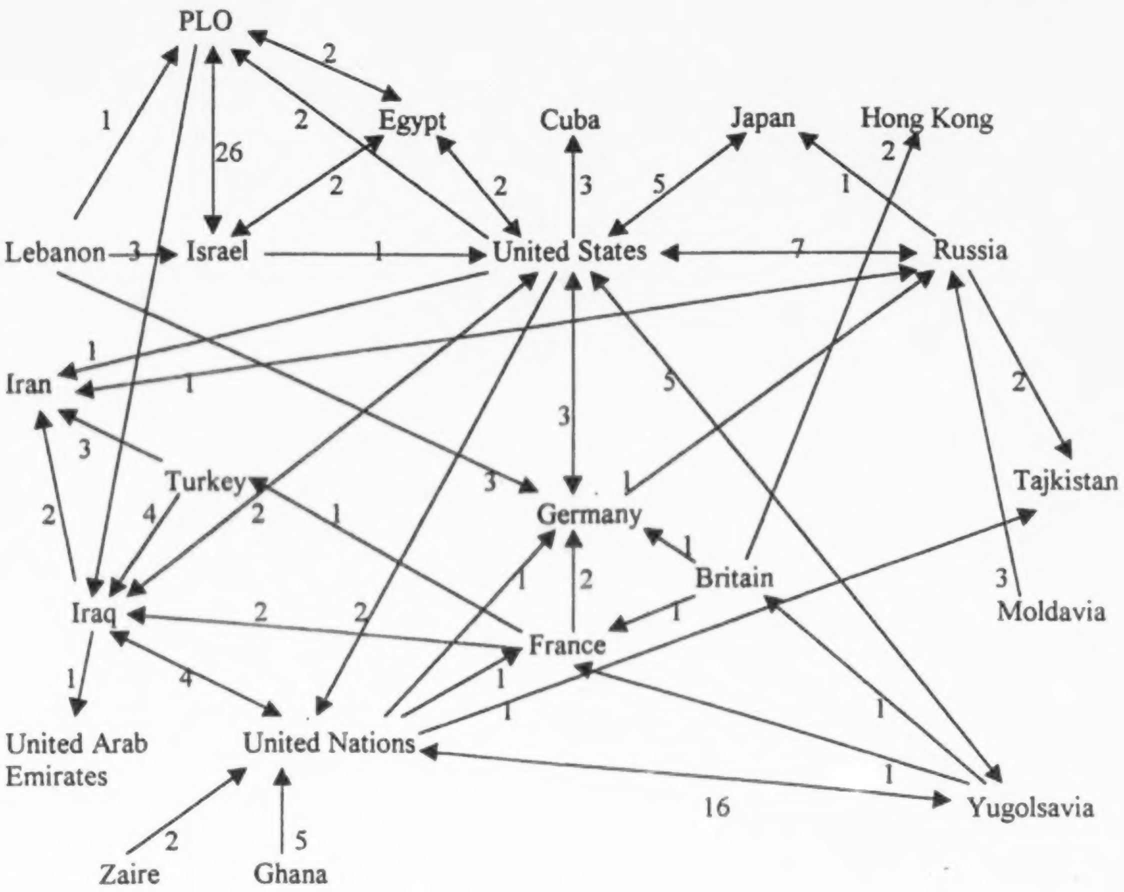
	Foreign News+		Foreign Policy News#	
	1992	1996	1992	1996
Nuclear arms proliferation	2.0%	2.3%	- %	- %
Racial issues	10.5	1.9	-	-
Religious/ethnic antagonism	18.2	0.9	2.8	-
Sovereignty	4.5	12.6	10.3	34.8
Economic reform	0.4	5.1	16.8	4.5
Relations with developing countries	0.4	0.5	20.6	13.6
Terrorism	2.8	2.3	0.9	-
Aggression/repression	5.3	5.1	-	-
East-West relations	0.8	1.4	-	6.1
Social justice	-	2.3	-	-
Democracy/democratic reform	2.4	3.3	0.9	-
National development	-	0.9	4.7	-
Regional cooperation	3.2	8.4	8.4	16.7
N =	247	214	107	66

* Based on multiple coding, the total percentage does not add up to 100. Entries are percentage of total stories related to the theme in either foreign news or foreign policy news. Themes receiving fewer than 4 references in either foreign news or foreign policy news in the two years combined were excluded.

+ Foreign news refers to the activities of foreign individuals, groups or other entities in any foreign country. It does not involve China.

# Foreign policy news refers to international relations and foreign policy activities between China and another country.

Figure 1: Network of Foreign News Coverage of Countries/Entities on CCTV, 1992-1996*


PLO
Egypt
Cuba
Japan
Hong Kong
Lebanon
Israel
United States
Russia
Iran
Turkey
Germany
Tajkistan
Britain
Moldavia
Iraq
France
United Arab Emirates
United Nations
Yugolsavia
Zaire
Ghana
2
1
26
2
2
2
3
5
1
2
3
1
7
1
1
3
5
2
3
2
4
2
1
3
1
1
1
2
1
3
2
2
1
4
1
1
1
1
16
2
5

* The network of coverage includes countries that appeared with other countries in at least three stories either as the primary or secondary country on CCTV in the two years combined. Links to other countries that received fewer than two stories are excluded. The direction of the arrow indicates that the country was linked to the other country as primary country. Figures represent frequencies the two countries were covered in the same story either as the primary or secondary country or both.

Advertising's Influence on Broadcast News Content:
A Study of Student Attitudes

Hubert W. Brown
Assistant Professor
Broadcast Journalism Department
(315) 443-4177
hwbrown@syr.edu

Beth E. Barnes, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Advertising Department
(315) 443-4045
bbarnes@syr.edu

both at
S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
Syracuse University
Syracuse, NY 13244

Submitted for consideration for Radio-Television Journalism Division
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication
1998 Annual Conference

Advertising's Influence on Broadcast News Content: A Study of Student Attitudes

Abstract

Much has been written in both the trade and popular press regarding advertising's influence on news content. However, virtually all of the discussion around the issue of advertising influence is from the news point of view. The present study attempts to present both the news and advertising perspectives. We report the results of a survey of both broadcast journalism and advertising students in a major university communications program. The students were asked to indicate their relative agreement with a range of statements related to the issue of advertising's influence on news content. The results of a comparison of means indicate that, while there are some areas of clear disagreement, broadcast journalism and advertising students are more alike than different in their perceptions related to the issue of advertising's influence on news content. A Q methodology factor analysis further identifies three distinct attitudinal groupings of the students in the study.

Advertising's Influence on Broadcast News Content: A Study of Student Attitudes

Much has been written in both the trade and popular press regarding advertising's influence on news content. Most observers cite an alarming trend toward increased advertiser pressure on news organizations, both overtly through direct attempts to influence coverage related to the advertiser's business (Auletta 1997; Overholser 1997) and the more subtle pressures related to concerns over audience size (Clary 1997; Underwood 1993). Virtually all of the discussion around the issue of advertising influence is from the point of view of news professionals, with both journalists and outside observers decrying increasing commercial pressure.

The present study, which is the initial stage in a larger effort designed to explore the issue in detail, attempts to present both the news and advertising perspectives. Specifically, we report the results of a survey of both broadcast journalism and advertising students in a major university communications program. The students were asked to indicate their relative agreement with a range of statements related to the issue of advertising's influence on news content. The statements were generated through discussions among industry professionals on both sides of the issue, and representing both national and local interests. Our intent was to assess how pre-professionals view this critical issue, and to see whether the two groups of students are alike or different in their perceptions.

Advertising Influence

Advertiser-related issues are key components of several basic models of news production. McManus (1995) identifies advertisers as one of ten players who interact to shape news production in American journalism. McManus characterizes advertisers as "the providers of the income that fuels the enterprise" (p. 310), and views their relationship with the news organization as one of exchange, where the advertiser pays the news organization to provide an audience for the advertiser's message. McManus goes on to note that "an individual advertiser ... may exert pressure over what becomes news, and perhaps even more over what does not" (p. 320). Through direct or implied threats to withhold advertising dollars as punishment for unfavorable news coverage, advertisers are viewed as able to influence news content.

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) discuss five forces that influence media content: individual media workers, media routines, organizational influences, outside influences, and ideology. Advertising is identified as one of the chief outside influencing agents, along with sources, the government, the marketplace, and technology. Shoemaker and Reese provide several examples of situations where large advertisers have sought to directly influence news content in order to quell negative coverage.

Other researchers have surveyed journalists in an attempt to assess the scope and nature of advertiser influence. Soley and Craig (1992) queried 150 newspaper editors, finding that nearly 90% reported strong advertiser pressures on content. Curtin (1998) conducted in-depth interviews with newspaper reporters and editors and also conducted a national survey among newspaper editors to look at perceptions of advertising influence. She found that changes in newsroom approaches were most often driven by perceived advertiser influence rather than direct influence, and that perceptions of advertiser influence were strongly held among the journalists surveyed.

The issue of advertiser influence on news content gained recent public attention as a result of the outcry over CBS' news and sports broadcasters wearing visibly-branded Nike apparel on the air during the Nagano Olympics. CBS News correspondent Roberta Baskin wrote a much-publicized letter to CBS News President Andrew Heyward charging the network with bowing to pressure from Nike to pull a repeat airing of a Baskin story critical of the advertiser (Hentoff 1998). Baskin suggested that the network had backed off on its coverage of Nike in order not to jeopardize the Olympic sponsorship deal, a charge denied by the network (Herbert 1998). The appearance of broadcast journalists wearing advertiser logos drew sharp criticism from the journalism community (Herbert 1998a; Stewart 1998); a group of prominent journalists charged in an open letter that CBS "crossed the line between professional journalism and commercial endorsements" (AP 1998).

Advertising Influence and Broadcast News

Some observers view the relationship between advertisers and broadcast news content as particularly problematic. Broadcast news is perceived as being more vulnerable to advertiser influence than are newspapers because of the greater intensity of competition in broadcasting, particularly at the local level (McManus 1995; Underwood 1993). Underwood is particularly harsh in his criticism of broadcast journalism practices, charging that "the hunger for ratings has pushed television news executives to become ever more commercial in their search for the audience" (p. 64).

In the broadcast newsroom in particular, advertising influence is often tied to profitability concerns. Local station news operations are known for generating large profits for their corporate owners; in a 1996 survey of news departments, 72% reported that they had made a profit during the previous year while only 4% of the stations responding reported a loss on news operations (Papper et al 1996). News is the cash cow in many broadcast operations (Smith 1997). McManus' model of news production "suggests that for mass-mediated news supported by advertising, achieving the greatest return requires a subordination of most journalism norms to market norms" (1995, p. 327). Given the profit pressures on broadcast journalism operations, the potential for advertiser influence on news content seems great.

Dimensions of Advertising Influence

The trade and academic literature suggest several key dimensions related to advertiser influence. Among the reoccurring themes are words like credibility (Herbert 1998b), impartiality (Joseph 1998), and integrity (Hentoff 1998). These are contrasted with statements on paying the bills (Overholser 1997), business enterprise (Auletta 1997), and increasing the audience for broadcast news (Clary 1997). In essence, the debate seems to come down to a contrast between journalism ideals and commercial realities. McManus (1995) characterizes the tension quite simply: "The principal *norm of journalism*, whether broadcast or print, is to inform the public ... The principal *norm of business* is to maximize profits over an indefinite period" (p. 308, italics in original). McManus uses the term "craft norms" (1995, p. 301) in discussing the basic tenets of journalism, a phrase quite evocative for educators involving in teaching students the essentials of their chosen field.

In order to remain viable, broadcast news operations must work within commercial reality. They must attract both an audience and advertisers to the newscast. In today's highly competitive marketplace, this may well be a delicate balancing act. The challenge is for broadcast journalists and the advertisers whose dollars support the newscasts to achieve a peaceful coexistence. Consequently, it is crucial to examine the issue of advertising's influence on news content from both parties' perspectives.

Method

This study used a combination of research approaches. In an initial phase, panel discussions were conducted among industry professionals representing both broadcast journalism and advertising. Opinion statements generated in those discussions as well as statements from trade press articles were then culled to create a 43-item questionnaire reflecting multiple dimensions of the advertising influence issue. That questionnaire was administered to senior-level undergraduate students majoring in either broadcast journalism or advertising to assess the similarities and differences in the students' perceptions of the opinions expressed in the statements. Results of the questionnaire were assessed both through a comparison of means and a Q methodology factor analysis. Each stage of the research process is described in more detail below.

Panel Discussions

The tenets of Q methodology guided the design of the research study. The heart of Q methodology is the Q-sample, the concourse of stimulus items amassed for respondents' reactions (McKeown & Thomas 1988). Ideally, stimulus statements are taken from respondents' own comments, or those of persons similar to them on some relevant dimension. As noted earlier, the student findings reported in this paper are part of a larger study. In the later stages, we will be assessing perceptions of advertising and broadcast journalism industry professionals. Consequently, we turned to industry professionals for their opinions on the advertising influence issue.

We conducted two panel discussions. The first took place in a Top 5 television market. Panelists included a senior media planning executive at a Top 10 U.S. advertising agency, a news anchor from the number one broadcast television network's local affiliate, a marketing promotion executive from a national cable television news network, and an advertising and public relations academician with extensive professional experience. The audience for this discussion was journalism and advertising alumni from two leading communication schools.

The second panel discussion was held in a Top 75 television market. Panelists were a news director for a broadcast network affiliate station, the national sales manager from the same station, an investigative reporter from another network affiliate station, and senior media planning executives from the two largest advertising agencies in the market. The audience for this discussion included faculty and graduate students of a communications school as well as some local media professionals.

Both panel discussions were moderated by one of the authors. The other author noted verbatim comments during the discussions (both discussions were also audiotaped for verification of statements). To begin the discussion, panelists were asked to respond to a statement characterizing the nature of the relationship between advertisers and news organizations. After those initial statements, the discussions were opened to questions and comments from the audience; the moderator posed additional questions as well. In both discussions, audiences were extremely active participants, often challenging panelists' statements and engaging in sometimes heated debate.

Questionnaire Design

After the second panel discussion, we reviewed the statements generated in both groups. Several key dimensions, elements of the advertiser influence issue, emerged. Discussants tended to talk in terms of either journalistic imperatives ("As important as it is for the news to make revenue, it's just as important to keep telling the truth") or commercial realities ("If you're the news operation that says, 'I'm not going to bow to advertisers, I'm going to stand by my journalistic standards,' you're not going to make money"). The dichotomy between credibility ("If you have news product with integrity out there, people won't zap away from it") and ratings ("Going after ratings has to be a concern for a broadcast journalist") also emerged.

The participants in our panel discussions were divided on whether audiences or advertisers drove news content. For example, one discussant declared "The audience really does rule what we see on television news" while another stated: "Advertisers have more power over news content now than they used to." Finally, some comments suggested that the solution to the problem is largely personal ("A journalist should not work for any news operation that puts any ratings pressure on them"), while others addressed a more corporate-level solution ("Any good news operation is a reflection of its market and hopefully the best things about it").

Since these elements were similar to those we had seen in the literature, we used them as the building blocks for our questionnaire. Specifically, we conceptualized four sets of continua: journalistic imperative vs. commercial reality, credibility vs. ratings, audience determination of content vs. advertiser determination of content, and personal solution vs. corporate solution. We reviewed all of the statements generated during the panel discussions and supplemented them with opinion statements made in news articles. Through a several-iteration culling process, we selected five statements to represent each continuum end-point, for a total of 40 statements. We added three additional statements, one that dealt with the local/national dichotomy ("Advertiser influence on news content probably happens more often at the network level than at the local level"), and two that we felt represented the extremes in opinion. All of the statements used in the questionnaire are listed in Table 1; the statements representing the extremes are numbers 26 and 32.

Each statement was presented with a 9-point scale, ranging from -4 (strongly disagree) to +4 (strongly agree). Respondents were instructed to circle the point on the scale that represented their own degree of (dis)agreement with the statement. (For analysis purposes, the scale was translated to a 1 through 9 measure, where 1 indicates strongest disagreement and 9 indicates strongest agreement with each statement.)

For classification purposes, we also included dichotomousquestions about the respondent's major, whether they had attended the local panel discussion, whether they had worked in either an advertising agency or broadcast news operation, and whether they had "ever personally observed an instance where an advertiser attempted to influence news content."

Sample Selection and Questionnaire Administration

We used an independent sample design with two groups. We chose to survey seniors in the two majors because we wanted students who were likely to have had some practical work experience in their chosen field and those who had been exposed to the complete curriculum in each program. We believed that this group would be most similar to industry professionals, as they can be classified as pre-professionals. Underclassmen might view the issues under discussion from a more theoretical, less practical perspective because of their relatively limited knowledge of and experience with industry realities.

Questionnaires were administered in one section of the advertising curriculum's capstone course and in two senior-level special topics courses in the broadcast journalism curriculum. In an effort to reduce demand characteristics, both authors were present when the questionnaire was administered in their own classes (the advertising class and one of the broadcast journalism classes); the advertising-specialist author administered the questionnaire in the second broadcast journalism class. Prior to completing the questionnaire, students were only told that they were participating in a study of attitudes toward advertising influence on news content; they were fully debriefed after completing the questionnaire. Students appeared to take the task quite seriously; average completion time was fifteen minutes or more.

Q Factor Analysis

At its most basic level, "Q entails a method for the scientific study of human subjectivity" (McKeown & Thomas 1988, p. 12). Q makes it possible to group subjects (the unit of analysis in a Q study) based on the similarity of their opinions on the topic(s) of interest. Q analysis provided us with another means to assess whether advertising and broadcast journalism students are alike or different in their opinions on the issue of advertising influence on news content.

Following standard analysis of the difference in means between the two groups on each of the 43 opinion statements, the SPSS factor analysis function was used to group subjects. A varimax rotation and comparison of factor loadings produced an optimized 3 factor solution.

Results

Twenty-two advertising majors and eighteen broadcast journalism majors completed the questionnaire. Only one student had attended the local panel discussion (a broadcast journalism major), reducing the possibility of bias created by that discussion. A majority of students in each group had practical experience in their chosen field (100% of broadcast journalism majors and 77.3% of advertising majors), suggesting that this group of respondents did indeed have a good sense of how the "real world" operates. Interestingly, 5 of the broadcast journalism respondents (27.8%) and 3 of the advertising respondents (13.6%) reported that they had personally observed an instance where an advertiser attempted to influence news content. However, subsequent analysis of results for these subjects did not indicate any particular influence of this direct experience on their answers.

Using SPSS, we performed two-tailed t-tests for independent samples in order to determine whether the observed differences in means between advertising and broadcast journalism students were statistically significant. We applied a significance level of $p<.01$ in accordance with the Bonferroni procedure in order to minimize the chances of inferring statistical significance where it does not, in fact, exist (Moore & McCabe 1989). Table 2 contains a listing of the seven statements where the difference in means met the statistical significance requirement. Recall that higher means indicate greater agreement with the particular statement.

The results of the questionnaire reveal a story of two groups of students more alike than they are different in their view of whether or not advertising influences broadcast news content and what should be done about it. There are some clear-cut issues upon which the two groups disagree, but by and large, a look at means and t-tests reveals that most of their differences are in the degree of agreement or disagreement with the statements posed to them. Where they diverge, a statement that approaches one of Mc Manus' "craft norms" is at the focus of that divergence. In addition, a number of statements yielded means in the middle of the distribution, indicating some indecision on the part of the students; in most of those instances, the two groups of students tested close together. The statements involved tended to be more pragmatic in approach, posing solutions to the "problem" of influence. It seemed that the two groups shared a lack of knowledge about what to do about the issue. They were clear about what they were "against," but less so about what they were "for" in addressing the relevant issues.

In three of our statement categories, the two groups diverged strongly. For the five statements which affirm the importance of ratings, the advertising students, as might be expected, agree more strongly, while the responses from broadcast journalism students suggest a degree of social desireability. The broadcast journalism students know that ratings are important, but they are in an environment within academe which bemoans that importance and encourages them to pursue journalism without regard to ratings. The students responded with the idealistic point of view that the pursuit of high ratings first and journalistic truth second is a bad thing. Their responses are especially strong with regard to Statement 8 (ADV M=5.86, SD=1.64; BJ M=3.83, SD=2.41, df=38, t=3.16, p<.003) and Statement 38 (ADV M=6.32, SD=1.52; BJ M=4.67, SD=2.17, df=38, t=2.82, p<.008), which speak of the entertainment and audience-gathering aspects of broadcast journalism.

Similarly, the two groups diverged on the statements that reflected the commercial reality of the advertising-broadcast journalism interaction. In these statements, the groups retreated to the norms of their respective professions. The responses here showed that broadcast journalism students acknowledged the commercial reality of the business, but clung to the journalistic imperative when the statement went too far for them. The two groups were close on Statement 16, which focuses on the bottom line (ADV M=6.60, SD=2.13; BJ M=6.78, SD= 1.77; t=-.30, df=38, p<.768,) but at a significant divergence on Statement 42, which says journalistic principles are not profitable (ADV M=5.32, SD=1.89; BJ M=3.61, SD=1.72; t=3.35, df=38, p<.002). As one would expect, the advertising students were fairly consistent in their belief in the importance of the bottom line. This is an area upon which the two groups agree, but only up to the point where it interferes with the journalistic perogative.

Likewise, the two groups diverged on the statements which reflect the view that advertisers determine the content of news. Both groups in general disagreed with the statements, but the distance between means here was the greatest of any statement grouping, indicating a difference in the intensity of disagreement. Statements 21, on the degree of influence (ADV M=4.55, SD=1.50; BJ M=4.11, SD=1.75; df=38, t=.85, p<.403), 23, on the news-advertiser relationship (ADV M=5.32, SD=1.86; BJ M=3.17, SD=2.09; df=38, t=3.44, p<.001) and 39, on advertiser power (ADV M=6.27, SD=1.93; BJ M=5.17, SD=2.20; df=38, t=1.69, p<.099) show more advertising student agreement in each case, in fact indicating that those students see the influence as less of a problem. But again, there are limits--both groups registered strong disagreement with Statement 6, on sourcing (ADV M=2.82, SD=1.62; BJ M=2.00, SD=1.57; df=38, t=1.61, p<.116), which would seem to indicate that both groups see the level of influence suggested by the statement as going too far.

The level of agreement in statement groups was notable in five of the eight areas suggested by the organizing continua. The two groups were relatively close together on statements that reflected the importance of the credibility of a news organization. Both groups were in mild agreement with most statements in this area, with the biggest difference at Statement 15, on credibility and ethics (ADV M=6.64, SD=1.33; BJ M=7.44, SD 1.20, t=-2.00,df=38, p<.053). This was the only statement where the difference was noteworthy (although not statistically significant), but for every statement, the mean for the broadcast journalism students was higher. They seem to agree on the importance of credibility, but again differ slightly on the intensity of the agreement.

In the area of statements related to journalistic imperative, operationalized in terms of journalistic impartiality, democratic freedom from advertiser influence, and news selection, both groups indicated agreement ranging from mild (Statement 9:ADV M= 5.18, SD=2.30; and Statement 37: BJ M= 5.17, SD=2.53) to very strong (BJ M= 8.39, SD=1.09 at Statements 17 and 22). There were marked, although not statistically significant, differences in reaction to Statement 17 (ADV M=7.45, SD=1.97; BJ M=8.39,SD=1.09, df=38, t=-1.80, p<.080), but again here, the issue was not whether they were on opposite sides of a statement, but rather the extent to which they were on the same side. Both groups seemed much more sure of their positions on issues in this area, as indicated by the relatively high means.

Both groups seemed to cluster around a more neutral position when confronting the statements that indicate that the audience determines content. None of the differences between the two groups on the statements in this area reached the level of significance (p<.01). Statements 5, 30, 19, and 27 deal with issues of audience attraction and retention, and showed a close grouping around the value of 6, ranging from Statement 5 (BJ M=4.83, SD=2.46; ADV M=5.68, SD=2.17; df=38, t=1.16, p<.253) to Statement 19 (BJ M=6.22, SD=1.31; ADV M=6.68, SD=1.94; df=38, t=.86, p<.396). On Statement 30, concerning viewer engagement, both groups showed more agreement (ADV M=8.18, SD=0.96; BJ M=8.17, SD=0.92; df=38, t=.05, p<.960). The statement seemed to serve as a common ground of agreement for both groups.

With regard to the statements that claim the solution to advertiser influence to be personal, the two sets of students again grouped very closely in generally mild agreement. An exception is both groups' apparent objection to Statement 3, which deals with working for ratings (ADV M=3.86, SD=2.15; BJ M=3.56, SD=2.28; df=38, t=.44, p<.663). The rest range in agreement from Statement 1 (whistle-blowing) on the low side (ADV M=5.77, SD=1.90; BJ M=6.06, SD=1.39; df=38, t=-.53, p<.602) to Statement 13 (advertiser reaction) on the high side of the scale (ADV M=6.73, SD=1.96; BJ M=6.78, SD=2.05; df=38, t=-.08, p<.937).

In response to the statements that expouse the position that the solution to advertiser influence is corporate, there is again general agreement that tends to be on the mild side. The two groups of students register mild agreement for Statement 12 on the relationship between news and sales (BJ M=5.11, SD=2.14; ADV M=5.86, SD=2.03; df=38, t=1.14, p<.262) and strong agreement for Statement 41, letting journalists do their job (ADV M=7.23, SD=1.60; BJ M=8.22,

$SD=1.48$; $df=38$, $t=-2.02$, $p<.050$). Statement 41 comes much closer than most of these statements to a "craft norm" kind of declaration.

A statistically significant disagreement arose over Statement 28, which forced the students to choose whether they thought the problem of advertiser influence on broadcast news content was more acute among local television stations and advertising concerns, or among networks and large advertising agencies. The advertising students were mildly in agreement that the source of the problem was national, while the broadcast journalism students strongly said the problem was local (ADV $M=5.50$, $SD=2.11$; BJ $M=3.00$, $SD=1.37$. $t=4.33$, $df=38$, $p<.000$). It should be noted that while most of the students had some internship and work experience, the nature of this particular communications program is such that much of the experience of broadcasting students is at local television stations, while advertising students tend to intern with national advertising agencies. So, the students tend to think the problem is greatest at the level with which they have had experience.

Q Factor Analysis

A three-factor solution generated through varimax rotation explained 44.5% of the variance in our subjects' factor loadings. (Factor 1 explained 30.0% of the variance, Factor 2 explained an additional 8.2%, and Factor 3, 6.2%.) The three-factor solution also met the Q methodology requirements of parsimony, minimal correlation between factor loadings across subjects, and factor explication (McKeown & Thomas 1988). All but three of our forty subjects loaded significantly on at least one factor while only six subjects had significant loadings on more than one factor. The rotated factor matrix can be found in Table 3.

Respondents loading significantly on Factor 1 indicated strongest agreement with Statements 33, 9, 32, 35, 40, 17, 41, and 2. This set of statements reflects the importance of independence and objectivitity in journalism ("Reporters and the news media have an obligation to be impartial and to have the appearance of impartiality" "If news organizations give in to pressures to curry to advertisers, they are making a mistake"). This set also places a value on credibility ("Any time a corporate sponsor gets too close to a news operation it erodes the credibility of that operation"). The grouping reflects the views of what we will call the "True Believers." Ten broadcast journalism majors and two advertising majors load most strongly on this factor.

Respondents loading significantly on Factor 2 indicated strongest agreement with Statements 37, 24, 22, 41, 43, 30, and 27. This group seems to want to tread a middle ground. They indicate respect for what they see as the journalistic imperative ("Advertising people must uphold the value of journalistic impartiality," and "Advertisers should concentrate on selling product and let journalists do their jobs"), but they are also pragmatic about the need for economic survival ("In broadcast news, it's all about the remote control," and "You have to keep viewers engaged to keep them from tuning out or turning off"). We can call this group the "Middle Grounders." Ten advertising and three broadcast journalism majors load most strongly on this factor.

Factor 3 reflects the students' view of economic reality. Respondents indicated strongest agreement with Statements 18, 30, 16, 31, 26, 39, 19, and 25. The statements focus on the importance of attracting an audience ("You have to keep viewers engaged to keep them from tuning out or turning off"), of maintaining high ratings ("Going after ratings has to be a concern for a broadcast journalist"), and of making sure television news is economically viable by courting advertisers (Advertising's bottom line is the buck, and the news organization's bottom line is the dollar, too," and "It is important that journalism reflects today's realities -- namely, that news operations be mindful of what attracts an audience, and advertisers, if they wish to survive"). We call these people the "Economic Pragmatists." Nine advertising majors and three broadcast journalism majors load most strongly on this factor.

Discussion

The study reveals a group of students who are struggling with how to reconcile jounalistic imperatives and economic realities. As a result, they appear to be having some difficulty determining how best to address the issue of advertising's influence over news content. Both groups, to differing extents, acknowledge some degree of advertising influence, and both groups, to differing extents, see that influence as troubling. But the "True Believers," which account for most of the broadcast journalism students, see resistance to economic forces as the solution to the influence. The "Economic Pragmatists" seem to be saying that the solution is to acknowledge that the journalistic imperative must take a back seat to the primacy of television ratings. However, only half of the advertising students are in this category. The other half are the "Middle Grounders," those people who see the defense of journalistic credibility as one way to address the problem of influence. This group seems to be worried about the influence of advertising on news content and about what they see as its potential to damage the credibility of the news operation. At the same time, they also acknowledge the need to make money. The "middle grounders" buy into the lessons that they are learning which stress media responsibility, but they are struggling to square those lessons with what they have also learned about economic reality.

Limitations

This study attempted to determine whether and how advertising and broadcast journalism students differed in their opinions regarding advertising's influence on broadcast news content. While we believe that the results of the study are illuminating, it is important to note that they only reflect the opinions of a limited group of students selected through a convenience sampling procedure. We believe that the group of students who participated in this study represent an appropriate sample given the goals of the research, but recognize that this was a non-probability sample, and therefore not generalizable to the larger populations of advertising and broadcast journalism majors.

Future Research Directions

As noted earlier, we plan to continue in this research stream by using the same questionnaire (with modified classification questions) with a national sample of advertising and broadcast journalism professionals. We hope to learn whether these two groups, like the students in the present study, are more alike than they are different when it comes to perceptions related to advertising's influence on broadcast news content. We are also interested in seeing how the professionals' opinions compare to those of the students within each discipline area.

As discussed in the literature review, much has been written on the subject of advertising's influence on news content. However, few people have offered steps for solving the problem. Another direction for future research might involve investigating alternative approaches to confronting the issue. While that is obviously beyond the scope of the present study, it is certainly something that should concern us as educators of the professionals of the future. We hope that this study provides at least a first step along that road through better understanding of the complex dimensions underlying the central problem of advertising's influence on news content.

TABLE 1

1. Not enough journalists engage in whistle-blowing about malpractice in their own shops.
2. Ad agencies seek to control the media.
3. A journalist should not work for any news operation that puts any ratings pressure on them.
4. Any good news operation is a reflection of its market and hopefully the best things about it.
5. The audience really does rule what we see on television news.
6. If you can go to anybody as a source on a news story, you might as well use one of your advertisers as the source.
7. If a news program has no credibility, there's no value to an advertiser in promoting its product near that.
8. Broadcast journalism IS entertainment; the content, to some degree, is influenced by the packaging.
9. In order to have a free democracy, we must have news that is free from the influence of advertisers.
10. It's news because people care about it.
11. Everything is sponsored now.
12. The smartest stations are the ones that realize that news and sales need to have a symbiotic relationship.
13. A journalist should not work for a news company that's going to look at a story based on how the advertisers will react.
14. Most news viewers will only watch two-minute segments.
15. It does come down to credibility in the newscast; there is a fallout from not adhering to a code of ethics.
16. Advertising's bottom line is the buck, and the news organization's bottom line is the dollar, too.
17. Reporters and the news media have an obligation to be impartial and to have the appearance of impartiality.
18. The two most important influences on news content are audience and revenue.
19. Emotion is really important in putting together news people will be engaged in.
20. Advertising people are too quick to knuckle under to pressure from their clients.
21. What exists in broadcast journalism today is a far cleaner, very upfront approach to advertiser influence.
22. As important as it is for the news to make revenue, it's just as important to keep telling the truth.
23. News departments function as the ideological arm of their chief sponsors -- the corporations whose advertising pays for what would otherwise be a losing business.
24. If you have news product with integrity out there, people won't zap away from it.
25. Going after ratings has to be a concern for a broadcast journalist.
26. It is important that journalism reflects today's realities -- namely, that news operations be mindful of what attracts an audience, and advertisers, if they wish to survive.
27. In broadcast news, it's all about the remote control.
28. Advertiser influence on news content probably happens more often at the network level than at the local level.

TABLE 1 (continued)

29. It's in advertising's best interest to promote news programming free of commercial influence.
30. You have to keep viewers engaged to keep them from tuning out or turning off.
31. The content of news has changed from what is important to what sells.
32. It is troubling that advertising interferes with journalists' attempts to tell stories of importance to the audience, and to tell them accurately and fairly, and it is up to journalists to resist that pressure.
33. Any time a corporate sponsor gets too close to a news operation it erodes the credibility of that operation.
34. Journalism should wrench back from the marketers the promotion of any news leads.
35. Advertising is both sustenance to a healthy news organization and a threat to its credibility and independence.
36. News operations should pay a lot more attention now to how stories are perceived by viewers, where the standup is done, how it's teased by the anchors.
37. A story doesn't belong in a newscast if it isn't news.
38. Journalism is in the audience-gathering business.
39. Advertisers have more power over news content now than they used to.
40. If news organizations give in to pressures to curry to advertisers, they are making a mistake.
41. Advertisers should concentrate on selling product and let journalists do their jobs.
42. If you're the news operation that says, "I'm not going to bow to advertisers, I'm going to stand by my journalistic standards," you're not going to make money.
43. Advertising people must uphold the value of journalistic impartiality.

TABLE 2

Statement	ADV Mean	BJ Mean	t-value	Sig. t
2	4.14	6.61	-3.96	<.000
8	5.86	3.83	3.16	<.003
23	5.32	3.17	3.44	<.001
28	5.50	3.00	4.33	<.000
32	6.05	7.83	-2.90	<.006
38	6.32	4.67	2.82	<.008
42	5.32	3.61	2.96	<.005

TABLE 3

Rotated Factor Matrix:

Subject	Factor 1 *True Believers*	Factor 2 *Middle Grounders*	Factor 3 *Economic Pragmatists*
5	.743	.147	.261
18	.718	-.106	.139
1	.708	.096	.156
24	.678	.389	-.201
6	.673	.274	.161
33	.659	-.127	.228
10	.604	.392	.236
12	.593	.441	-.068
4	.590	.320	.266
7	.497	.211	.152
14	.495	.299	.313
3	.433	.418	.290
2	.373	.240	.125
8	.372	.106	.063
22	.128	.654	.239
21	.121	.644	.055
16	.416	.599	.203
25	-.046	.583	.102
17	.441	.546	.072
9	.409	.532	-.194
37	.224	.462	.120
30	.098	.460	.382
27	.283	.455	.039
38	-.104	.454	.257
23	.385	.429	.298
29	.225	.425	-.030
19	.147	.417	.127
39	.379	.388	.100
35	.144	-.176	.731
32	.313	-.071	.701
34	-.182	.176	.663
31	.315	.337	.649
28	.268	.332	.639
40	.259	-.182	.626
13	.308	.255	.576
11	.404	.235	.564
36	-.031	.347	.559
20	.041	.112	.491
15	.157	.378	.470
26	.303	.330	.465
Eigenvalues	12.00	3.30	2.49
% variance	30.0	8.2	6.2

Factor loadings of +/- .393 are significant at p<.01

Subjects 1-18 are broadcast journalism majors; subjects 19-40 are advertising majors.

References

Associated Press. (1998, February 15). Critics say CBS policy has crossed the line. The Buffalo News, p. 7B.

Auletta, K. (1997, November 17). Demolition man. The New Yorker, p. 40-45.

Clary, J. (1997, July 7). Channel 17 seeks to tap $40M market. Nashville Business Journal, p. 1.

Curtin, P.A. (1998). We have met the enemy and he is us: Newspaper editors' perceptions of advertiser pressures on editorial content and practice. American Academy of Advertising Annual Conference, Lexington, KY, March.

Hentoff, N. (1998, March 3). Swoosh! Goes CBS's integrity. The Village Voice, p. 22.

Herbert, B. (1998a, February 15). Fashion statement. The New York Times, p. 4-13.

Herbert, B. (1998b, February 17). Swoosh: Olympic fashion statement. The Denver Post, p. B-07.

Joseph, J.D. (1998, February 25). Lame excuse. The Washington Post, p. A16.

McKeown, B. & Thomas, D. (1988). Q Methodology. Sage University Paper series on Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences, series no. 07-066. (Beverly Hills: Sage).

McManus, J. (1995). A market-based model of news production. Communication Theory, 5(4), 301-338.

Moore, D.S. & McCabe, G.P. (1989). Introduction to the practice of statistics. (New York: Freeman).

Overholser, G. (1997, June 1). Blurring the news. Washington Post, p. C8.

Papper, B., Sharma, A., & Gerhard, M. (1996, April). News departments: Producing profits. RTNDA Communicator, p. 18-26.

Shoemaker, P.J. & Reese, S.D. (1996). Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content. (White Plains, NY: Longman)

Smith, D. (1997, July 30). Taking the heat over principle. Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication Annual Conference, Chicago, IL.

Soley, L. C. & Craig, R.L. (1992). Advertising pressures on newspapers: A survey. Journal of Advertising, 21(4), 1-10.

Stewart, L. (1998, February 15). CBS woes go beyond the ratings to a swoosh. Los Angeles Times, p. N4.

Underwood, D. (1993). When MBAs rule the newsroom: how the marketers and managers are reshaping today's media. (New York: Columbia)

WOMEN IN TELEVISION NEWS MANAGEMENT:
DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

By

LAURA K. SMITH
JOHN W. WRIGHT, II

Submitted to the Radio-Television Journalism Division of AEJMC
for presentation at the 1998 national conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

John W. Wright, II
Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies

College of Journalism and Communications
University of Florida
PO Box 114800
Gainesville, FL 32611-4800
(352) 392-6557
jwright@jou.ufl.edu

WOMEN IN TELEVISION NEWS MANAGEMENT: DO THEY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated whether females in small, medium, and large market local television news operations make news decisions differently than their male counterparts. The study also investigated perceptions of television news stories produced by males and females. Four hypotheses were advanced:

H1. As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the degree of interest females have in the station's stories increases.

H2. As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the proportion of women included as sources in news stories increases.

H3. Female reporters are more likely to include a higher proportion of female high-level sources in news stories than their male counterparts.

H4. Female reporters produce stories of more interest to women than male reporters.

Researchers selected ten stations from the state of Florida; five with at least 40% women in management and five with no women in management. Videotaped copies of the stations' newscasts were obtained. The researcher created synopses for each news story from each station for inclusion on survey instruments distributed nonrandomly to women respondents. Respondents' interest levels were coded alongside pertinent facts about each news story, such as reporter gender, source gender, and source "type".

H1-H3 were not supported. However, results revealed that female reporters were more likely than males to produce stories of interest to women, suggesting that gender-based assignments are still prevalent in TV news. In addition, the researchers discovered that small market television stations run solely by men produced a news product that was significantly more interesting to women than the product produced by stations with women in management. Clearly, this finding conflicts with expectations. The researchers suggest that male managers, as a result of being more reliant on market research regarding issues relevant to women, do a better job than female managers at gauging female viewers' interests.

Women in Television News Management:
Do They Make A Difference?

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1960s, activists have sought to increase the proportion of women and minorities working in television news. In some cases, these activists have gone so far as to challenge the broadcast licenses of stations which, they claimed, failed to present a well-rounded view of society. The challenges, as well as modern efforts to improve female and minority representation in the media, are based on the idea that women and minorities will have different perspectives and will do things differently than white men.

American women face obstacles in the work force that men do not. Limited access to the top jobs, often called the "glass ceiling," is one of their more perplexing obstacles. For example, Davidson and Cooper, authors of *Shattering the Glass Ceiling: The Woman Manager* (1992) say that reports that women are gaining ground in managerial positions can be misleading. They argue that the occupations in which women are most likely to be managers are still traditionally female ones, such as catering and retailing. Shapiro (1992) adds that traditionally female jobs come with traditionally low wages.

Scholars such as Steenland (1987) believe the female "perspective" is the reason women must be represented in proportion to their numbers in society. This position assumes that the women who make it up the career ladder, in fact, have an impact on the job market; that they do things differently from the men who came before them.

The TV business long has been referred to as an "old boys network" where power-brokers are mostly white, upper-class males (Paisner, 1989, p. 19). Women have made substantive inroads into the field, but men still dominate TV's managerial ranks.

Analyses of women's progress in communications (Dalton 1992) show that women in communications believe they are disadvantaged compared to men in the areas of salary, promotions, and power (91%, 83%, and 87% respectively). Many of the men Dalton surveyed also believed women were disadvantaged in these areas. Walsh-Childers, Chance, and Herzog (1996), in a random survey of women working for newspapers, found that many felt discrimination regarding pay, promotions, and assignments. Females tended to work in lower level positions with few holding editor-level managerial positions. Interestingly, perceptions of discrimination were less pronounced in newsrooms that more gender-balanced.

Social Responsibility and the Media

Why is it important that women achieve equality in the television news? Many media scholars would sat it is a question of social responsibility. The media might be privately owned and fundamentally protected by the First Amendment, but as Purvis (1982) puts it, "responsibility of the press is a fundamental American issue" (p. 1). The issue of responsibility is particularly pertinent where the broadcast industries are concerned. By using limited public airwaves, TV producers have power over the "scarce information resources that individuals and societies depend upon to attain their goals" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, p. 304). Although the "scarce resource" argument has come under fire in recent years, scarcity remains an issue for news programming. No matter how many viewing options are available via cable or satellite downlink, only a limited number of sources provide us with local, national, and world news. With a few exceptions, including the 24-hour-a-day Cable News Network (CNN), network operations devote most air time to entertainment programming. This severely limits the number and depth of stories they cover. On the local level, many stations provide news and information, but they limit the amount of time allotted to actual news stories.

According to Severin and Tankard (1988), each of the Four Theories of the Press proposed by Seibert (Liberal, Authoritarian, Social Responsibility, and Totalitarian) endorses the doctrine of social responsibility. The doctrine assumes that the "truth" will emerge from a multiple agenda. Similarly, Goldenberg (1978) says that, as a powerful means of determining social issues and thought, the media must "be truthful, complete and accurate . . . provide for the exchange of comment and criticism and . . . present a representative picture of the constituent groups in society" (p. 51).

By being present in greater numbers and taking on more positions of power in the field, can women change television's depictions? Cantor (1988) thinks so:

> Underlying the motivation for reforming the practices of the media industries, whether in portrayal or employment, is the assumption that these reforms would trickle down. Placing more women in powerful roles in the industry would over time change how women are depicted, which in turn would change their role in society. (p. 81)

A good deal of research points to the impact women already are having on the entertainment industry, but little work has been done to determine what contributions women make in America's local television newsrooms. In the present study the researchers review pertinent literature regarding predictive and media effects theories, including agenda setting, schema, social learning, and cultivation theories and collect data to determine whether female news managers are, in fact, having a noticeable impact on the content of local television news.

LITERATURE REVIEW

When compared to other media in its impact on modern American society, television is considered to be a giant among societal shapers. Radio, newspapers, and magazines also disseminate cultural information, but television plays the dominant media role in America. Signorielli and Morgan (1990) found "more time is spent watching television than doing anything else besides working and sleeping" (p. 14). According to Severin and Tankard (1988), the interpretive function of the media becomes dysfunctional when "the media perpetuate stereotypes . . . enhance conformity . . . [and] enforce majority views at the expense of minority opinions that are not aired" (p. 218).

Dominant Hegemony

Many media scholars contend that television programming reflects the dominant hegemony of American culture (Beasley & Gibbons, 1993; Cantor, 1988). Supporters of this model believe that just as America's power structure is male, white, and upper-middle class, so too is the media's power structure (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1986).

In summarizing symbolic interactionism, Schellenberg (1990) says that human "selves" generally (a) originate through social interaction; (b) develop in response to social experience; and (c) reflect the consistency of social experience. If, therefore, decision-makers are traditionally male, white, and upper-middle class, interactionists suggest that these decision-makers' interpretation of the world around them would reflect their own perspectives.

Through what Barnett (1973) calls "ideological plugola," television decision-makers reinforce the existing social structure by depicting society as it has always been. And Shaw and Martin (1992) suggest that, through the media, the white male agenda eventually comes more in line with other agendas as a kind of averaging out of agenda differences. They argue that the "news media, incidentally and indirectly, function to provide just enough agreement on public issues to provide at least dialogue" between various social groups (p. 903). Shaw and Martin call this theory "democratic convergence."

The FCC and Activist Challenges

During the 1970s, the broadcast industry came under fire from minority and women's' rights groups who believed they had become victims of a hegemonic media. In 1966, the United Church of Christ won a court battle against the FCC and became the first citizens group to successfully challenge a broadcast license on the grounds that a station's programming practices were socially irresponsible ("Office of," 1966). Church officials believed that a television station in Jackson, Mississippi, was guilty of racism, and they wanted the station's license revoked. The FCC has since adopted policy prohibiting discrimination, including that based on gender.

Since the passage of this rule, some of the more notable license challenges have come from women's rights groups. In 1972, the National Organization for Women petitioned the FCC to deny license renewals for several television stations, including WABC-TV in New York City and WRC-TV in Washington D.C. (Beasley & Gibbons, 1993; Paisner, 1989; Cantor, 1988). NOW attacked the stations for deficiencies in three key areas: (a) ascertainment of women's opinions about community issues, (b) news and programming about women's issues, and (c) employment of women. Although none resulted in a station losing its license, Cantor (1988) considers the challenges of the 1970s to be the women's movement's most important tactic to reform the media, forcing station owners to review and perhaps alter their hiring and programming practices.

The 1980s and 1990s

The makeup of television newsrooms changed dramatically in the 1980s. TV news staffs around the country typically doubled in size from 1972 to 1985 (Stone, 1986). There was also a sex change, of sorts, as women truly began moving into management-level positions. In 1972, only two of 406 TV stations surveyed had female news directors (Prato, 1992). Twenty years later, Stone (1992) concluded that the number of female news directors in stations across the country had increased, but leveled off at 17%. As we approach the year 2000, the number of women in managerial positions is increasing. Castro (1988) found that women news directors earn 34% less than their male counterparts. Stone believes the wage gap can be explained in part by the fact that women, as relative newcomers to the television industry, tend to head smaller TV news operations ("Women Directing," 1993).

Not Everyone Is Happy

Because more Americans rely on television for their news than ever before (Driscoll, 1992; Poll, 1991), scholars such as Ziegler and White (1990) argue that women and minorities have not gained enough ground. The authors point to Gans' discussion in which news is said to reflect "a white male social order and 'is a supporter of the public, business, and professional, upper-middle class sectors of society.'" Sanders (1990) echoes Gans' critical concern and suggests that because what people see on TV becomes their view of reality, America needs a better representation of its population:

> Since the world we live in is not all-male, all-white, we need the different perspective that others can bring. Women's life experiences may be similar to their male colleagues, but they are far from identical. A woman's ranking of life values and a man's have significant differences not only in values for individuals but in values for the nation. (p. 103)

Gersh (1993) says "despite all the hype about 1992 being the 'Year of the Woman'" (p. 20), male and female reporters are still failing to seek out women's comments and expert opinions on the network news. She also says that by using the white male as "the subtle norm by which all else is gauged" (1992, p. 30), the media promulgate the polarization of communities. For example, when the subject being interviewed is a white male, references to race and gender are rarely noted, whereas descriptive phrases, such as "black leader" or "female candidate" are often employed. Gersh (1992) notes that news articles about women tend to describe them in ways that rarely are used when writing about men (e.g., hairstyles, clothing, marital and parental status). Rakow and Kranich (1991) call it a semiotic system where women stand in patriarchal culture as a point of comparison.

An annual TV news study conducted by the Center for Media and Public Affairs shows that 23% of all network news stories are reported by women, compared to just 13% in 1990 ("Newsroom Diversity," 1994). The outlook is better for local female reporters. As early as 1984, 42% of reporting staffs were female (Graham, 1984). However, Pingree and Hawkins (1978) suggest that the bias against women and women's issues may be due to the fact that the managers are historically male:

> It is very easy to imagine how these men could unintentionally exclude women from the news by being most willing to consider newsworthy those topics they themselves are interested in and affected by, or that loom large in their own attitude structures. (p. 123)

Rakow and Kranich (1991) argue that a hard news-soft news distinction has institutionalized a gender division between "'serious, important' news that is overwhelmingly masculine and 'human interest, lifestyle' news that is more likely to be the purview of women" (p. 11). One factor central to this hard news-soft news dichotomy involves the story type. Graber (1978) found that women are most interested in stories about social problems that develop over time, such as welfare programs for the poor, the plight of the elderly, education, health care and crime. These stories tend to be issue-oriented as opposed to event-driven and are considered "soft" because they are interpretive in nature, whereas "hard," or event-driven news simply tells the viewers what has happened (Pingree & Hawkins, 1978). Rakow and Kranich suggest that one needs only to look at the scarcity of women as newsmakers and as sources to understand why women might feel excluded from the news product. If Pingree and Hawkins's suggestion of an unintentional bias is true, it would follow that more women in television management might positively affect both the number of "women's issue" stories selected for air and the number of women quoted within those stories.

Women As Sources in the News

Media research has shown that women appear as sources far less frequently than men ("Scoring the News," 1993; Ziegler & White, 1990). Not only do they appear less frequently, but when they are quoted, women also commonly are typecast in traditional female roles ("Women Have Lost," 1992). Fifty percent of the time, women are represented on the network evening news as private individuals affected by crime, disasters, public policy, or the actions of their families and not as authorities, experts, or politicians (Graber, 1978; Rakow & Kranich, 1991).

Public affairs programming also overlooks the expert opinions of women and minority groups ("Study of PBS," 1992). Hoynes and Croteau (1989; 1990) found that demographic diversity was largely missing on both "MacNeil/Lehrer" and "Nightline," where more than 82% of the subjects were male. The greatest disparity appeared to be in international politics. Domestic political coverage was more representative, with up to 26% of guests being women. As is the case in news coverage, Hoynes and Croteau discovered that the women who appeared on these programs were "ghettoized" into traditionally "female" areas. Wolf (1993) found the same to be true on "Crossfire."

Why is it important that women are properly represented in the mass media? Sanders (1990) believes that because what people see on TV strongly influences their view of social reality, America needs a more accurate depiction of its population:

> Since the world we live in is not all male, all-white, we need the different perspective that others can bring. . . . A woman's ranking of life values and a man's have significant differences not only in values for individuals but in values for the nation. (p. 109)

Sanders does not suggest that all white men have the same perspective. She does, however, suggest that a more accurate depiction of women and their roles in society might result if women were more heavily involved in television's decision-making process.

Is this really the case? By being present in greater numbers and taking on more positions of power in the industry, can women affect the images America sees on TV? Two fields of scholarship inform this question: Breed's theory of social control and schema theory. Three additional fields of scholarship--social learning theory, cultivation theory, and agenda setting theory--explain why such changes are important for TV viewers.

Theory of Social Control

Breed's (1958) theory of social control suggests that in order to keep their jobs and gain promotions, reporters and staff members must figure out for themselves the "editorial slant" of the news organization for which they work. Media scholars believe that by following a system of traditional news values, the media frequently fail to incorporate messages important to women and minorities. Pingree and Hawkins (1978) posit that decision-makers reliance on "event-driven" news is part of the problem. They argue that much of what women consider news involves long-standing themes and social issues that "do not demand immediate publication" (p. 121). While Robinson (1978) does not suggest that such news criteria necessarily inhibit access to the public-discussion agenda, she does believe that these criteria:

> funnel reporting about women into the less prestigious human interest and personality sections . . . [reinforcing] the prevailing opinion that women engage in the "lesser" pursuits. (p. 91)

Schema Theory

Schema theory suggests that from birth, people put thoughts and experiences into specific categories, or cognitive structures. A schema is a network of associations that helps individuals organize the vast amount of information they encounter every day and guide perceptions (Bem, 1983; Taylor and Crocker,1981). As new information comes to an individual, it is filed into the appropriate schema. The media provide information that affects our schema about social groups by creating categories of beliefs.

Gender schema theory proposes that as children learn what roles they are to play in society, they develop a schema for which attributes are to be linked with their own sex and, hence, with themselves" (p. 355). Bem calls the process sex-typing and believes male and female children become "typed" as "masculine" or "feminine" by the time they are 4 or 5 years old.

How does the concept of gender schemata contribute to the present discussion of television news? If one were to apply Bem's theories to this area of mass communication scholarship, it would follow that working women are likely to support less conventional sex-role stereotypes whereas people with traditional views are likely to have constructs more consistent with conventional, stereotypical attributes. Theoretically, then, news operations with a large percentage of women in management might be more likely than traditional, male-dominated news operations to promote women's issues in the news.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory suggests that members of a society learn about its customs and traditions through observation. Television has been found to play a prominent role in this learning process. McCoy (1990) believes television has joined family, friends, and school as a primary agent of socialization prior to the age of 12. Some research even suggests that, in certain cases, television can do a better job of transmitting "collective" societal standards and norms than interpersonal sources (Nwanko & Onwumechili, 1991).

Because they have fewer real life experiences to which they can compare media images, children are perhaps the most vulnerable members of American society when it comes to television's socializing effects (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; McGilvary & Penrose, 1991; Signorielli, 1991, 1993; Stroman, 1991). When children see depictions that reflect the dominant hegemony, particularly in cases where strong female or minority models are unavailable in their personal lives, it is believable that the depictions have the effect of perpetuating the status quo (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1989). These arguments suggest that when female models are present in and on the news, media-dependent viewers will see women as important contributors to the national dialogue.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory posits that, over time, depictions on television lead "heavy" viewers to perceive the real world in ways that reflect the most "stable and recurrent patterns of portrayals" in the television world (Signorielli & Morgan, p. 10). Although implications for news are apparent, much cultivation analysis research involves entertainment and advertising industries in which the dominant hegemony is obvious (Giri, 1990; Perse, 1992). Tan's study found, for example, that young girls exposed to television commercials for beauty products gave significantly higher ratings to "popularity with men" and "desirability as a woman" as important factors for their future career roles (cited in Vangelesti, 1988, p. 472).

Agenda Setting

Agenda setting, as defined by Severin and Tankard (1988), "is the idea that the media . . . come to determine what the public thinks about and talks about" (p. 207). Since McCombs and Shaw's seminal study (1972), a growing body of research has shown that media coverage can affect our perceptions of what is important (Rogers & Dearing, 1988). White (1990) maintains that the media's ability to set the "social agenda" is "one of the most important effects of television" (p. 11).

Although studies show that television news coverage is at least partially determined by "real world conditions and events" (Behr & Iyengar, 1984), by choosing the stories decision-makers believe are important, the medium appears to have some power to shape issue salience (Iyengar, Peters, & Kinder, 1982).

Another concept, called "framing", contributes to the present discussion of news agenda setting. Hendrickson (1992) defines framing as

> a central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration. (p. 2)

Rakow and Kranich suggest that a media frame exists for women and women's issues:

> Given that so few women are used as newsmakers or as news sources, a woman's appearance in a story takes on special significance. We do not mean to suggest that men conspire to exclude women or are necessarily conscious of selecting women for particular purposes. Rather, news media personnel work within a taken-for-granted meaning system in which it simply makes sense to do these things . . . the selection of particular sources and the roles they are permitted to play in the news story are what gives the story its frame. (p. 12-13)

Although it is clear that media frames can change over time, research shows that women are not presently represented in or on the news in proportion to their presence in society ("Dissecting Network News," 1990; "Scoring the News, 1993; Stone, 1992; Ziegler & White, 1990). With more women in powerful newsroom positions, it is conceivable that women's' perspectives and stories of interest to them would be featured more often.

Do Women Make a Difference?

If women were represented in the mass media in proportion to their percentage and positions in society, would their input change what we see on TV? There has been little research on this question, particularly in relation to television news. Cantor (1988) claims that it is not possible to make a direct connection between the gender of the communicator and the content produced. Likewise, Johnston's (1990) conversations with television executives revealed no actual difference between men and women in decision-making criteria or technique in entertainment programming.

Decision Making in TV

In the field of communications, Dalton (1992) determined that men and women in the media perceive themselves as being different from one another in the workplace. Respondents felt that men and women are different emotionally (men 80%, women 86%), mentally (men 74%, women 63%), and physically (men 72%, women 79%).

Do such gender differences, if they exist beyond perceptions, affect media messages? Hudson (1992) had television news directors and producers view six versions of a violent television news story. Subjects chose whether to air the story, and if so, which version represented his or her perception of an "acceptable" level of violence for broadcast. In most cases, men and women chose similar versions. However, in situations where respondents were told that a competing station had already aired a more graphic and violent version of the video, men were more likely than women to approve a more violent version for broadcast.

A study by the Center for Media and Public Affairs (CMPA) lends support to the notion that men and women handle sexually oriented stories differently from one another ("Gender a Factor," 1992). After examining 224 news stories on abortion, CMPA researchers found that males featured mostly antiabortion opinions in their stories (35% pro-choice, 65% antiabortion), whereas women presented mostly pro-choice sentiments (56% pro-choice, 44% antiabortion).

Hypotheses

The literature suggests that women's presence is having an effect on the television product, but much of the research to date has focused on entertainment. When studies are conducted on television news, most frequently they are based on the network news where comparatively few women tread the management path.

Most female managers presently are working in local news. It is upon this level, then, that the present study is focused.

Wickham (1989) analyzed 15 newscasts from three network-affiliated television stations in Memphis, Tennessee. She discovered that middle-management employees, such as assignment managers and executive producers, are responsible for the bulk of the story ideas generated in local television news stations. If this holds true for other TV markets, female managers are in a position to give women a significant voice in television news, and local news operations who heavily employ women in management should produce newscasts that are discernibly different from the newscasts crafted by male-only management teams.

Newscasts created in large part by women should, among other things, include a greater number of stories appealing to women and rely more heavily upon female opinions in all types of news stories, not just those stories deemed "women's issues." The present study will analyzing the news product from several of Florida's network-affiliated stations. The following hypotheses are advanced:

> (H1) As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the degree of interest females have in the station's stories also increases.
>
> (H2) As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the proportion of women included as sources in news stories also increases.
>
> (H3) Female reporters are more likely to include a higher proportion of female high-level sources (HLS) in news stories than their male counterparts.
>
> (H4) Female reporters produce stories of more interest to women than male reporters.

METHOD

The study was conducted in three phases. In order to compare television stations' news products based upon the percentage of women in management, it was first necessary to ascertain the managerial makeup of television stations that might be involved in such a comparison and select stations for the analysis. Once the stations were chosen, the researchers asked each station to provide videotaped copies of specific newscasts. Finally, a content analysis of the newscasts was conducted. A detailed description of the three phases follows, beginning with the station selection process.

Choosing the Stations

Given the advantage of geographic proximity, the researchers' familiarity with the region, and its diversity of market sizes, television stations involved in this study were chosen from the state of Florida. Further, because network-affiliated operations are more likely than independent stations to produce a competitive news product, only commercial stations affiliated with one of the four largest commercial networks (ABC, CBS, NBC, and FOX) were included.

Using the 1994 edition of the *Working Press of the Nation: TV & Radio Directory*, the researchers identified 34 network affiliates in the state. Each station was contacted and surveyed about its news operation and newsroom management team. Eight of the 34 stations had no in-house news operations (although some aired news products produced by other local affiliates), leaving 26 stations as potential subjects for the study.

Interviewees at each of the 26 remaining stations were asked to identify their news managers by name and title.[1] Interviewees were told that their lists should contain *only* management-level employees who actively participate in decisions about news content.

After recording the names and titles of the newsroom managers, the gender of each was noted.

Lastly, each interviewee was asked to list the newscasts their station produces between 5 p.m. and midnight. These broadcasts are typically the station's most viewed, most inclusive, and most competition-oriented newscasts.

Once the interviews were complete, the researchers calculated the percentage of women in management for each station, and then ranked the stations by that percentage. The list indicated a split into three groups: stations with no women in management (males-only), stations with between 20 and 33 percent women in management, and stations with 40 percent or higher women in management (40-percent-plus). Eleven of 26 affiliates fell within the middle category. The remaining stations had either no women in management or a markedly larger-than-average percentage of women in management, average being approximately 26 percent.

---

[1] The researcher's personal experience in television news was vital at this phase of the study. Formerly the lead producer of the 5 p.m. newscast at WFLA-TV in Tampa, Florida, the researcher spent several years familiarizing

PLACE TABLE ONE ABOUT HERE

Because the purpose of this study is to compare stations with female managers to those without, it seemed reasonable to analyze only those affiliates at either end of the management spectrum. Therefore, stations in the middle category were excluded from the study. The next step in the process involved deciding which of the remaining 15 stations would be included in the study.

To control for potential differences due to TV market size,[2] each of the remaining stations in the "40-percent-plus" category was paired with a similar-sized station in the "males-only" group. The researchers used Arbitron's 1993 market rankings in the pairing process.[3]

Once the stations were chosen, news directors were asked to provide videotaped copies of their newscasts from two specified week days.[4] Eight of the ten stations fully complied with the researchers' request for videotaped copies of their newscasts. One station (WJHG in Panama City) was unable to provide visual copies but did provide transcripts of their news programs; complete with necessary information regarding reporters and interviewees. A tenth station (WCIX in Miami) provided some visual materials but did not provide a complete set of show tapes or transcripts. Therefore, the researchers resorted to paying a video "news clip" service to obtain the missing materials. The "news clip" service provided videotaped copies of the

---

herself with the inner-workings of television newsrooms and their managerial structures.

[2] Market size is a potentially confounding variable because stations in larger markets tend to focus on different sorts of news stories than those in smaller markets. There are approximately 209 television markets in the United States. The "market rankings" are based primarily on size of the viewing audience.

[3] In the case of WBBH, which had two possible matches in the males-only category (WINK and WEVU), WINK was selected over WEVU based upon the researcher's former dealings with WINK's news director. The researcher acknowledges a potential bias in this decision. The judgement, however, was based solely on the ease of obtaining materials for the study and not upon any preconceived notion of news style or known differences in their news products.

[4] News operations sometimes schedule certain topics on one particular day of the week. For example, Tuesday's health segment may be devoted to women's health, whereas Wednesday's health block is devoted to men's health.

missing newscasts, completing the collection process. With the exception of being purchased, these materials were no different than videotaped copies provided directly by the other stations.

The Story Synopses

The researchers constructed a survey instrument to measure the "level of female interest" in each of the ten stations' news products. This required creation of a synopsis of each news item, from each newscast, from each station. Since there were 949 stories, this procedure resulted in 949 synopses.[5] The synopses were worded as closely as possible to the original "newsriting" style. Due to the extremely large number of news items, the researchers conducted a stratified random sample, selecting approximately fifty percent (or 470) of the stories from each station. The resulting stories were then systematically assigned to one of ten survey instruments. Each survey instrument, then, contained 47 synopses from ten different TV stations. In other words, each of the ten survey instruments was completely different from the others, containing 47 distinct items. Survey items were systematically ordered to help control for fatigue.

The survey instruments were distributed nonrandomly to women at three locations. For each story, respondents were asked to make two judgments. First, they were asked to judge, on an eleven-point scale, how interesting they found the story. Then, they were asked to judge, on an eleven-point scale (options ranged from 0 to 10), how interesting they thought other women might find the same story. Respondents were also asked to reveal basic demographic data including their age, race, household income, and occupation.

RESULTS

The average respondent was nearly 37 years of age with 16 years of education, meaning the typical respondent attended at least four years of college. The high education demographic was not surprising since data were collected in a university community. Respondents' were 82% Caucasian, 12% African-American, 4% Asian, and 1% "Other," and had a median annual household income between $30,000 and $50,000 dollars.

---

[5] Weather and Sports segments were not included in the survey or analysis. If, however, stories about weather or sports appeared outside their traditional segments, they were treated as news items.

Interest Levels

In all, 470 stories were evaluated to create an "interest level" measure for each story and an "interest level" for each station. Each of the 470 stories included on the researchers' survey was evaluated by ten respondents. As noted earlier, respondents were asked to rate each story twice--once to rate their "personal interest" in the story and again to rate what they believed "other women's interest" would be in the same story. This process resulted in a total of 9400 evaluations (470 stories x 2 evaluations x 10 respondents per story). These evaluations were used to create the first of three "interest level" constructs.

The first construct is the "Evaluation Construct." Here, the researchers took both the "personal" and "other women's" interest scores from each respondent, for each story, and summed the two scores into an index. Then, this index value was divided by two to create a mean "respondent interest" score for the story.[6] The same procedure was used for all 470 stories. Because ten respondents rated each story, the process resulted in 4700 evaluations, or ten "respondent evaluation" scores for each story. On a scale of zero to ten, the grand mean for these "respondent evaluation" scores was 5.9 with an overall between-item standard deviation of 2.5.

Next, using the 4700 "respondent evaluation" scores from the "Evaluation Construct," the researchers devised a second construct, called the "Story Construct." Here, the researchers created a mean "story interest" score for each of the 470 stories by summing the ten "respondent interest" scores in an index and dividing by ten. This created a mean "story interest" score for each of the 470 stories. On a scale of zero to ten, the grand mean for these "story interest" scores was 5.9 with a between-item standard deviation of 1.4.

Using the "story interest" scores from this construct, the researchers were able to determine level of interest in each of the 470 stories.

---

[6] For example, Respondent #1 rated Story #1 twice. On a scale of zero to ten, she gave the story a 6 for "personal interest" and an 8 for "other women's interest." The two scores were summed and divided by two (14/2), resulting in a mean "respondent interest" score of 7.

Lowest-Scoring Stories

The five lowest-scoring stories originated from four different stations. The mean "story interest" scores ranged from 2.2 to 2.85. The lowest-scoring of all 470 stories involved an upcoming concert by the Grateful Dead, a popular musical group, where police were concerned about rowdy fans. Other low-interest stories involved local professional sports teams and details of the day's stock market figures.

Highest-Scoring Stories

The five highest-scoring stories also originated from four different stations. The mean "story interest" scores ranged from 8.85 to 9.05. The highest-scoring of all 470 stories involved the discovery of a newborn baby inside a plastic bag. Also of high interest to women was a new vaccine for cervical cancer, a legal agreement between a Florida college and the family of a student killed by a stalker, and a story describing how much money the city saved when a local serial killer pled guilty to his crimes.

Interest Levels By Station

A third and final construct involves mean interest levels for each of the ten TV stations involved in the study. This "Station Construct" was calculated by summing mean "story interest" scores from a particular station, then dividing that value

by the number of evaluated stories from that same station. This resulted in a mean "station interest" score. For example, mean "story interest" scores for stories originating from WCJB-TV were summed and divided by 26, creating a "station interest" score for WCJB of 6.4.

A Priori Hypotheses

Only one of the researchers' four a priori hypotheses was found to be significant at or below at this level.

(H1) As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the degree of interest females have in the station's stories also increases.

In order to examine H1, a Spearman Rank Order Correlation was performed. The null hypothesis was not rejected. Results revealed a negative but nonsignificant

$r_s = -0.20$ ($p \leq 0.30$, $n = 10$). The researchers concluded there was no significant correlation between the gender make-up of television management teams and women's interest levels in the news product.

(H2) As the proportion of women in local news management increases, the proportion of women included as sources in news stories also increases.

In order to examine H2, a Spearman Rank Order Correlation was performed. Again, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Results revealed a nonsignificant $r_s = 0.10$ ($p \leq 0.70$, $n = 10$). In other words, there was no significant correlation between the proportion of women in local news management and the proportion of women included as sources in news stories. Pertinent values and rankings for this analysis can be found in Table 5-4.

(H3) Female reporters are more likely to include a higher proportion of female high-level sources (HLS) than their male counterparts

In order to examine H3, the researchers performed a one-tailed t-test for two independent samples for proportions. For male reporters, the proportion of female high-level sources was .22. For female reporters, the proportion of female high-level sources was .24. Differences between the two proportions were not significant ($t = -0.50$, $df = 336$, $p \leq 0.30$) and the null hypothesis was not rejected (see Table 5-5). The statistics show female reporters were no more likely to include women as high level sources than were male reporters.

(H4) Female reporters produce stories of more interest to women than male reporters.

In order to examine H4, a one-tailed t-test for two independent samples for means was conducted. Differences between male reporters (with a mean "story interest" score of 5.7) and female reporters (with a mean "story interest" score of 6.6) were found to be statistically significant, $t = 3.14$, $df = 129$, $p \leq 0.001$. In other words, the hypothesis was strongly supported. Female reporters were significantly more likely than male reporters to have reported stories with a higher level of interest to women.

Post Hoc Analysis

Post hoc analyses were conducted on the data set for two fundamental reasons. First, the researchers wanted to know whether significant results could be achieved by grouping together "males-only" stations then comparing them, as a whole, to stations with "40%-plus" women in management. An a priori hypothesis of this nature would have required literature suggesting a "critical mass" of women is necessary to result in content differences. The researchers looked for and found no such literature, either in the field of mass communication research or in other industries where women's input at the management level has been studied. Second, the researchers wanted to analyze the effect of station market size on story interest levels.

"Critical Mass" Analyses

We begin with a reevaluation of H1 and H2 using a statistical approach different than the method used in the a priori hypotheses. Given the large number of stories involved in the analyses and the increased statistical power of a t-test as compared to Spearman's Rank Order Correlation, for Post Hoc #1, the researchers conducted a two-tailed t-test for two independent samples for means. The test was conducted to determine whether story interest levels are significantly higher for stations with women in management (as a group) as compared to stations with no women in management (as a group). Two-tailed findings were not significant, $t = -.69$, df, 468, $p \leq 0.50$. As with the Spearman's Rank Order method used in H1, the researchers found no significant difference in story interest levels based upon the gender make-up of television management teams.

For Post Hoc #2, a two-tailed t-test for two independent samples for proportions was conducted to determine whether the proportion of female sources is higher at stations with women in management (as a group) as compared to stations with no women in management (as a group). Again, findings did not reach the predetermined level of significance, $t = 0.50$, $df = 792$, $p \leq 0.70$.

Market-Size Analyses

The second post hoc analysis was designed to determine whether market size impacts story interest levels. Specifically, the researchers sought to determine whether story interest levels can be explained by market size and station management type, where station management type refers to stations with women in newsroom management (grouped together) versus stations without women in newsroom management (grouped together).

In order to conduct relevant statistical tests, the researchers assigned each station to one of three market-size categories: small, medium, and large. These assignments were done using Arbitron's 1993 market rankings. If the station was in a TV market with a ranking of 51 or lower, it was placed into the "small market" category. Those stations include WINK, WBBH, WCJB, and WJHG. If the station ranked between 21 and 50, it was placed in the "medium market" category. Those stations include WESH, WFTV, WPTV, and WTLV. If the station ranked 20 or better, it was placed in the "large market" category. Those stations include WPLG and WCIX.

Once the stations were grouped, a two-way ANOVA was conducted with market size and station management type as the independent variables, and story interest levels as the dependent variable. The interaction between station management type and market size was included in the model. Table 5-9 shows the results of the ANOVA.

Although the model itself did not quite reach the predetermined level of significance ($\underline{p} \leq .053$), the researchers continued to assess the significance of the main effects and the interaction in the model. The two-way interaction was significant ($\underline{p} \leq .035$), while the main effects appeared to be insignificant ($\underline{p} \leq .414$ and $\underline{p} \leq .153$). The results suggest story interest level is dependent upon the interaction between station management type and market size. A Multiple Range Scheffe Test shows the interaction is significant only among small market stations run by men when compared to small market stations run by women. In other words, the researchers found a significant relationship (albeit in the opposite direction from what was expected) between station management type and women's interest levels when market size is introduced as a variable. When the television stations were run exclusively by men, and were located in small markets, women's interest levels in the stories produced were significantly higher.

DISCUSSION

As noted earlier, only one of the researchers' four a priori hypotheses was found to be significant. For

H1, the researchers expected a positive correlation between the proportion of women in management and mean "station interest" scores. No such correlation was found. In fact, results of the Spearman's Rho show a slightly negative correlation, albeit a statistically insignificant one. Not only does this finding run counter to the researchers' expectations, it runs counter to certain feminist arguments that predict a noticeable impact by women on the television industry. In this case, using the researchers' data set and the chosen statistical test, newsrooms with females in management were no more likely to produce stories of interest to women than were newsrooms run by men.

The researchers believe many social and market forces could explain these results. First, there is the possibility that news is news, regardless of gender--that male and female news managers make similar content decisions because they follow the same definition of "newsworthiness." It is also possible that, in order to succeed in a white, male-dominated industry, female managers have adopted more traditional concepts of news. Or, it could be that in modern times, market research, and not individual news managers, dictates news coverage. Researchers tell managers what sorts of stories will bring in viewers and those managers, regardless of gender, follow the suggestions.

H2 and H3

For H2, the researchers hypothesized that female managers would attempt to improve the overall representation of women on their air. For H3, the researchers hypothesized that female reporters would contribute to an improved representation of women on the air by searching out and interviewing more female newsmakers and experts. Neither hypothesis was supported.

It is likely that no gender differences exist. Given that most television stations are making an effort to attract female viewers, it could be that stations run by males are just as "inclusive" as stations with women in management. This research shows female sources appear in news stories approximately 30 percent of the time. So, although women make up more than half of the population, they continue to be underrepresented as sources in news stories.

Significant Findings

As H4 predicted, survey respondents were significantly more interested in stories reported by females than in stories reported by males. This was the case even though respondents did not know the reporter's gender or, in fact, whether the story was delivered by a reporter at all. For all they knew, the story could have been read on the nightly news by one of the stations' anchors. Respondents rated their interest level in stories based simply upon a written synopsis. It is also clear that differences in H4 could not be due to differences in the stations for which male and female reporters work. A priori statistical analyses and a post hoc ANOVA showed no significant differences of mean "story interest" scores by station.

So why do respondents find stories reported by females significantly more interesting than stories reported by males? To what can we attribute the difference? Although it is possible females may write, cover, or put a "spin" on a story in a way male reporters do not, the researchers believe the finding may be due the way stories are assigned. Despite many positive steps towards gender equity in the news industry, research shows gender-based assignments are still common (Beasley & Gibbons, 1993). Female reporters are frequently assigned to cover stories considered to be of specific interest to women: children, education, social problems, the elderly, health issues, consumerism, the environment, etc.[7]

If one looks at the stories that come closest to the mean "story interest" score for male and female reporters (mean for males = 5.7, mean for females = 6.6), one can see a hint of gender-based assignments in the data set. As shown in Table 6-1, two of the five female-reported stories relate to children, a third relates to health, and a fourth concerns community efforts to help others in a war-torn country. Among male reporters, the five stories coming closest to the mean deal with crime, politics, and local "spot news" events, including a road project slowing traffic and a plane crash (see Table 6-2).

The second significant finding in this study involves the interaction between station management type and market size as they relate to mean story interest levels. The results show a significant interaction at the small-market level. Specifically, the researchers found that when television newsrooms were managed exclusively by men, and were located in small markets, women's interest levels in their stories were significantly higher. Obviously, this finding runs contrary to expectations. The researchers assumed stations run in large part by women would produce a greater number of stories of interest to women. However, the study showed results in the opposite direction in small markets. Looking at the list of stories from male-run stations (WINK and WCJB), one can see that stories focusing on crimes against women, injuries to children and elderly citizens, breast cancer, cervical cancer, skin cancer, and general health care issues elicited strong, positive ratings from survey respondents. Alternately, low-scoring stories from stations with women in management (WBBH and WJHG), which focused on such things as a Teamster strikes, stock market figures, sports, strippers, and kick line dancers, received very low "story interest" scores.

---

[7] To many people, a dichotomy in which men cover events, politics, and crime (often called "hard" news) and women cover home-, heath-, and community-based stories (often called "soft" news) is understandable and perhaps even preferable. For example, female viewers may be more likely to relate to (and possibly trust) another woman reporting on breast cancer than a male reporting on the same subject. Similarly, from the newsroom perspective, it is often assumed female reporters will know more about the subject of breast cancer because they are personally at risk or affected by it.

This is not to say that male-run stations did not cover the same, low-interest stories. In fact, at least one (if not both) of the male-run stations aired stories about the TV Dinner turning 40, the Teamster's strike, and the stock market. It appears, however, that newsrooms run solely by men aired either fewer low-interest stories or more high-interest stories than their competitors.

In the news industry, managers and other editorial decision-makers frequently rely on their personal experience to help guide them in the story selection process. When news managers and decision-makers are unsure of their market demographics or are trying to ascertain their viewer's interests, managers also frequently rely upon market research. In trying to reach females in their viewing audience, it is feasible that stations run solely by men might be more reliant upon market research to tell them what is of interest to female viewers, whereas female managers might assume they know what interests women because they themselves are female. In other words, having less innate knowledge of women's interests, maybe males are forced to be more deliberate in their selection of female-interest stories. Alternately, women might be taking their knowledge of female interests for granted. If the female managers are not representative of women in general (and have different ideas about what is newsworthy as compared to women in society at-large), they could be making mistakes about what stories are of interest to women.

If this is true, why were the results not found in the larger-market stations? The present study showed that among stations run solely by men, female interest levels in news stories decreases as market size increases. One plausible reason for this decline is that in larger cities like Orlando, Jacksonville, and Miami, there are more "must cover" stories dealing with crime and other "hard news" events. And because these stories take up a substantial amount of time in the newscast, there is less time for "issue-oriented" news coverage. However, in small markets, which typically have fewer local "hard news" stories from which to choose each day, news managers and reporters have more opportunities for "enterprise pieces" they believe will interest their viewers. Therefore, if small-market stations run by men are more reliant upon market research than their female counterparts, they might be more in tune with the average female viewer's interests.

Limitations

Given the scarcity of research regarding the impact of women on television news, the present research is exploratory. The sample size of television stations in the study small and the sample was nonrandom. All stations were from the state of Florida, and only those television stations with 40% or greater women in management or no women in management were selected. While this sort of selection process is not unusual in exploratory research, it does make it difficult to generalize to other populations.

Survey respondents were also selected in a nonrandom fashion and were from a higher than average SES demographic. Admittedly, women of lower socio-economic status might rate stories differently. Finally, external validity of the respondents is threatened because respondents rated their interest level in stories based upon a written synopsis. They did not watch the stories on television. Visual information, video shot selection, and other variables would likely affect the evaluations.

REFERENCES

Abel, J.D., & Rogowski, P. L. (1976, March). Women in television station management: The top fifty markets. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Broadcast Education Association, Chicago, IL.

Allen, D. (1993). Donna Allen's comment. Media Report to Women, 21(2), 12.

Bandura, A., Ross, D., & Ross, S. (1963). Imitation of film-mediated aggressive models. Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 66(1), 3-11.

Barnett, J. H., & Karson, M. J. (1989). Managers, values and executive decisions. Journal of Business Ethics, 8(10), 747-772.

Barnett, S. R. (1973, January 15): Merger, monopoly and a free press. The Nation, pp. 76-86.

Beasley, M. H. (1977). Women in media: A documentary sourcebook. Washington DC: Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press.

Beasley, M. H., & Gibbons, S. J. (1993). Taking their place: A documentary history of women and journalism. Washington DC: The American University Press.

Behr, R. L., & Iyengar, S. (1984). TV news, real world cues, and changes in the public agenda. Public Opinion Quarterly, 49, 38-57.

Bem, S. L. (1981). Gender schema theory: A cognitive account of sex typing. Psychological Review, 88(4), 354-364.

Bem, S. L. (1983). Gender schema theory and its implications for child development: Raising gender-aschematic children in a gender-schematic society. Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 8(4), 598-616.

Berkowitz, D. (1990). Refining the gatekeeping metaphor for local television news. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 34(1), 55-68.

Bodec, B. (1982). Why so few women at the top? Marketing & Media Decisions, 17, 70-73.

Breed, W. (1958). Mass Communication and socio-cultural integration. Social Forces, 37(2), 109-116.

Britton, H. A. (1976, April). The role of women in television: Avenues for change. Paper presented at the meeting of the Telecommunications Policy Research Conference, Airlie, VA.

Burks, K. K., & Stone, V. A. (1993). Career-related characteristics of male and female news directors. Journalism Quarterly, 70(3), 542-549.

Cantor, M. G. (1980). Prime-time television: Content and control. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

Cantor, M. G. (1988). Feminism & the media. Society, 25(5), 76-82.

Cantor, N. (1981). A cognitive-social approach to personality. In N. Cantor & J. F. Kihlstrom (Eds.), Personality, cognition, and social behavior (pp. 23-44). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Case, T. (1992). Making their mark: More women reporters are covering the male-dominated political beat; Much of the coverage still patronizes women. Editor & Publisher, 125(31), 11-13.

Cohen, C. (1981). Goals and schemata in person perception: Making sense from the stream of behavior. In N. Cantor & J. F. Kihlstrom (Eds.), Personality, cognition, and social behavior (pp. 45-68). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Cortes, C. E. (1992). Literacy: An educational basic for the information age. Education and Urban Society, 24(4), 489-497.

Crosson, L. (1989). You are what you watch. Social Education, 53(3), 168-169.

Crow, S. M., Fox, L. V., Hartman, S. J., & Payne, D. M (1991). Gender and values: What is the impact on decision making? Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 25(3/4), 255-269.

Dalton, R. E. (1992, May). The female maze. Report presented at the annual convention of the American Women of Radio and Television, Phoenix, Arizona.

Davidson, M., & Cooper, C. (1992). Shattering the glass ceiling: The woman manager. London: Paul Chapman.

Davie, W. R. (1992, August). Sex, violence and consonance/diversity: An analysis of local TV news values. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Quebec, Canada.

DeFleur, M. L., & Ball-Rokeach, S. (1989). Media system dependency theory. In M. DeFleur & S. Ball-Rokeach (Eds.), The mass media in contemporary society (5th ed., pp. 297-327). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Dissecting network news: Study finds men dominate, with more women anchors than reporters and few minorities. (1990). Broadcasting, 118(9), 40.

Dreifus, C. (1994, January 2). Cokie Roberts, Nina Totenberg and Linda Wertheimer. The New York Times Magazine, pp. 14-17.

Driscoll, J. (1992, October). Turnabout! New study finds people learn more about the news from TV than from print. The Bulletin of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, 744, 24-28.

Executive women making strides. (1993, June 30). Gainesville (FL) Sun, A9.

Fannin, R. (1985). Women extended reach for media's brass ring. Marketing and Media Decisions, 20, 51-57.

Fiske, J. (1991). Television: Polysemy and popularity. In R. Avery & D. Eason (Eds.), Critical perspectives on media and society (pp. 346-354). New York: The Guilford Press.

Fontana, L. (1988). Television and the social studies. Social Education, 52(5), 348-350.

Franzwa, H. (1974). Working women in fact and fiction. Journal of Communication, 24(2), 398-401.

Freidan, B. (1986, November). Where do we go from here? The next step for today's working women--and men. Working Woman, pp. 152.

Garneau, G. (1988). Women on the masthead: Panel discusses the obvious: There just aren't many. Editor & Publisher, 121(24), 114.

Gender a factor in reporters' coverage of abortion, CMPA says. (1992). Media Report to Women, 20(4), 2.

Gersh, D. (1992). Promulgating polarization: Study finds media coverage of women, minorities tends to be over-simplistic, which exacerbates social strains. Editor & Publisher, 125(41), 30-33.

Gersh, D. (1993). Women still underrepresented. Editor & Publisher, 126(2), 20-22.

Giri, R. A. (1990). The image of women in the American and Indian TV commercials: A comparative analysis. Nepal: Tribhuvan University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 329 503)

Goldbenberg, E. N. (1978). An overview of access to the media. In L. K. Epstein (Ed.), Women and the news (pp. 50-63). New York: Hastings House.

Graber, D. (1978). Agenda-setting: Are there women's perspectives? In L. K. Epstein (Ed.), Women and the News (pp. 15-37). New York: Hastings House.

Graham, K. (1984, July). Women and power. Folio, pp. 146-149.

Graziano, A., & Raulin, M. (1993). Research methods: A process of inquiry. New York: HarperCollins College Publishers.

Hendrickson, L. (1992, August). Child maltreatment: Press frames in the 20th century. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Higgens, E. T., & King, G. (1981). Accessibility of social constructs: Information-processing consequences of individual and contextual variability. In N. Cantor & J. F. Kihlstrom (Eds.), Personality, cognition, and social behavior (pp. 69-121). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Hoynes, W., & Croteau, D. (1989). Are you on the Nightline guest list? New York: Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting.

Hoynes, W., & Croteau, D. (1990). All the usual suspects: MacNeil/Lehrer and Nightline. New York: Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting.

Hudson, T. (1992). Graphic depiction of violent material in television news: News directors' and producers' perceived acceptability levels. Dissertation Abstract International, 52(07), 2305. (University Microfilm No. AAC91-34953)

Irving, V. (1988). Promoting prosocial behavior to nurture caring in head start teachers and children (Ed.D. Practicum paper). Ft. Lauderdale, FL: Nova University.

Iyengar, S., Peters, M., & Kinder, D. (1982). Experimental demonstrations of the not-so-minimal consequences of TV news programs. The American Political Science Review, 76, 848-858.

Jaddou, L., & Williams, J. (1981). A theoretical contribution to the struggle against the dominant representations of women. Media, Culture, and Society, 3, 105-124.

Jennings, R. M. (1972). Television station employment practices: The status of minorities and women. New York: United Church of Christ.

Jensen, B. (1992). A male perspective on gender problems. The Quill, 80(4), 29-34.

Johnston, S. H. (1990). Network television executives: A study of organizational behaviors and decision strategies in entertainment programming. Dissertation Abstracts International, 50(08), 2289. (University Microfilms No. AAC90-0662)

Johnstone, J. W. (1976). The news people: A sociological portrait of journalists and their work. Campaign: University of Illinois Press.

Kammer, J. (1992). On balance: The journalism of gender. The Quill, 80(4), 28-34.

Lasswell, H. D. (1948). The structure and function of communication in society. In L. Bryson (Ed.), The communication of ideas (pp. 37-51). New York: Institute for Religious and Social Studies.

Leiban, R. (1969). The public airwaves and trouble in paradise. Reprinted from the Alfred I. DuPont Survey of Broadcast Journalism 1968-1969 (pp. 112-121). New York: Grosset & Dunlap.

Loukas, H. F. (1979, April). Window dressing revisited. Remarks delivered at the annual Telecommunication Policy Research Conference, Sky Top Lodge, PA.

Luker, R., & Johnston, J. (1988). TV and teens: television in adolescent social development. Social Education, 52(5), 350-353.

Marzolf, M. T. (1993, August). Women making a difference in the newsroom. Paper submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women in Journalism and Mass Communication, AEJMC, Kansas City, KS.

McCoy, D. (1990). The impact of socialization on personality formation and gender role development. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 340 476)

McGilvary, L., & Penrose, P. (1991, September). Living happily with television. Paper presented at the Early Childhood Convention, Dunedin, New Zealand.

McGurn, W. (1992). The year of the women. National Review, 44(13), 21-22.

McQuail, D. (1991). Mass media in the public interest: Towards a framework of norms for media performance. In J. Curran & M. Gurevich (Eds.), Mass media and society (pp. 68-81). New York: Chapman and Hall.

Media women poll: 1980s not a decade of progress. (1990). Editor & Publisher, 123(6), 13-22.

Melamed, L. (1989). Sleuthing media "truths": Becoming media literate. History and Social Science Teacher, 24(4), 189-193.

Mills, K. (1974). Fighting sexism on the airwaves. Journal of Communication, 24(2), 403-406.

Montague, C. (1993). How viewers feel about TV. American Demographics, 15(3), 18-20.

Morgan, M., & Rothschild, N. (1983). Impact of the new technology: Cable TV, peers, and sex-role cultivation in the electronic environment. Youth & Society, 15(1), 33-50.

Moyer, E. (1993, June 24). Women in film inching forward. USA Today, p. D8.

Nash, A. J. (1974, August). Minorities and women in broadcast news: Two national surveys. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, San Diego, CA.

Newsroom diversity. (1994). Media Monitor, 8(1), 4.

Nwanko, R., & Onwumechili, C. (1991, May). Communication and social values in cross cultural adjustment: Conceptual background and some propositions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Conference, Chicago, IL.

Office of Communications of the United Church of Christ v. FCC. 359 F.2d 994 (DCCir. 1966).

Paisner, D. (1989). The imperfect mirror: Inside stories of television newswomen. New York: William Morrow and Company.

Perse, E. (1992, August). Cultivation in the newer media environment. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.

Pingree, S., & Hawkins, R. P. (1978). News Definitions and their effects on women. In L. K. Epstein (Ed.), Women and the news (pp. 116-135). New York: Hastings House.

Poll: Most got war news on TV. (1991, May 2). Gainesville (FL) Sun, A8.

Poll: NBC was most violent last season, study finds. (1993, July 29). Gainesville (FL) Sun, A3.

Prato, L. (1992). The news director proves her mettle. Washington Journalism Review, 14(1), 24-29.

Press, A. (1989). The ongoing feminist revolution. Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 6(2), 192-202.

Purvis, H. (1982). The press: Free and responsible? Austin: University of Texas.

Rakow, L. F., & Kranich, K. (1991). Women as sign in television news. Journal of Communication, 11(1), 9-25.

Red Lion Broadcasting Co. v. Federal Communications Commission, 395 U.S. 367 (1969).

Reese, S. D. (1991). Setting the media's agenda: A power balance perspective. In J. A. Anderson (Ed.), Communication Yearbook 14 (pp. 309-355). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Robb, D. (1991, July 1). For femmes, G.M. means "generally missing." Variety, p. 24.

Rogers, E., & Dearing, J. (1988). Agenda-setting research: Where has it been, where is it going? In J. A. Anderson (Ed.), Communication Yearbook 11 (pp. 555-594). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Sanders, M. (1990). Why we need more of the woman's view. Television Quarterly, 25(1), 103.

Schramm, W., Lyle, J., & Parker, E. (1961). Television in the lives of our children. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Scoring the news media: Underrepresentation of women continues. (1993). Media Report to Women, 21(2), 2.

Seligman, D. (1992, October 5). Talking back to the movement. Fortune, p. 147.

Severin, W., & Tankard, J. (1992). Communication theories: Origins, methods, and uses in the mass media. White Plains, NY: Longman.

Severn, J., Belch, G., & Belch, M. (1990). The effects of sexual and non-sexual advertising appeals and information level on cognitive processing and communication effectiveness. Journal of Advertising, 19(1), 14-22.

Shapiro, L. (1992). Why women are angry. Newsweek, 118(17), 41-44.

Shaw, D. (1991, August 19). Gender of editors affects coverage of stories on sex. Los Angeles Times, A18.

Shaw, D. & Martin, S. E. (1992). The function of mass media agenda setting. Journalism Quarterly, 69(4), 902-920.

Signorielli, N. (1991). Adolescents and ambivalence toward marriage: A cultivation analysis. Youth & Society, 23, 121-149.

Signorielli, N. (1993). Television and adolescents' perceptions about work. Youth & Society, 24(3), 314-341.

Signorielli, N., & Morgan, M. (1990). Cultivation analysis: New directions in media effects research. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Slater, M. D. (1989, May). Processing social information messages: Social group familiarity, fiction/non-fiction labels, and subsequent beliefs. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, CA.

Sontag, D. (1992, April 26). Anita Hill and revitalizing feminism. The New York Times, A31.

Spense, J. (1978/79). What do people do all day? Screen Education, 29, 34-40.

Splaine, J. (1989). Critically viewing the social studies: A new literacy. Louisiana Social Studies Journal, 16(1), 15-18.

The status of women in the broadcast industry today. (1985). An inside look at the broadcasting industry. Symposium conducted at the meeting of the National Commission on Working Women, Washington, DC.

Steenland, S. (1987). Prime time power: Women producers, writers, and directors on TV. National Commission of Working Women (1987). Washington, DC: Author.

Stein, M. L. (1992). APME coverage: Associated press member editors meet in Honolulu. Editor & Publisher, 125(51), 16-20.

Stone, V. A. (1986, August). The changing profiles of broadcast news directors. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Norman, OK.

Stone, V. A. (1988, July). Pipelines and dead ends: Jobs held by minorities and women in broadcast news. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Portland, OR.

Stone, V. A. (1989). Careers in radio and television news. Washington, DC: Radio and Television News Directors Association.

Stone, V. A. (1992). Little change for minorities and women. Communicator, 46, 26-27.

Stroman, C. A. (1991). Television's role in the socialization of African American children and adolescents. Journal of Negro Education, 60(3), 314-327.

Study of PBS documentaries shows omission of women, minorities. (1992). Media Report to Women, 20(2), 1.

Taylor, S. E., & Crocker, J. (1981). Schematic bases of social information processing. In N. Cantor & J. F. Kihlstrom (Eds.), Personality, cognition, and social interaction (pp. 89-134). Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Top jobs in TV news, sales still dominated by men, survey says. (1992). Media Report to Women, 20(3), 1.

Turque, B. (1992). Arlen Specter's specter. Newsweek, 119(17), 31.

TV reporters mostly white, male in 1991. (1992). St. Louis Journalism Review, 22(144), 4.

U.S. Department of Commerce. (1991). Statistical Abstract of the United States. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Congress. House. Committee on the Judiciary. Responsibilities of the Federal Power Commission in the Area of Civil Rights (92nd Cong., 2d sess., H.Doc. 92-24). Washington: Government Printing Office, 1972 (Y4.J89/1:92-24).

U.S women journalists improve earnings, but work force representation is same as 1982. (1993). Media Report to Women, 21(1), 1.

Vangelisti, A. L. (1988). Adolescent socialization into the workplace: A synthesis and critique of current literature. Youth & Society, 19(4), 460-484.

Walsh-Childers, K., Chance, J. and Herzog, K. (1996) Women Journalists Report Discrimination in Newspapers. Newspaper Research Journal, 17, 68-87.

Watson, C. D. (1984, August). Women in leadership positions: A comparison of considerate versus dominant behavior styles. Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Wicks, R. H. (1992). Schema theory and measurement in mass communication research: Theoretical and methodological issues in news information processing. In S. A. Deetz (Ed.), Communication Yearbook 15 (pp. 115-145). Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

Wilson, J. G. (1990). At sea in a sea of change: Few news organizations have faced up to the new reality. The Quill, 78(1), 31.

Window dressing on the set: Women and minorities in television. (1977). Washington, DC: United States Commission on Civil Rights.

White, J. (1990). Beyond the looking glass. Nurture, 24(3), 11.

Wickham, K. W. (1989, April). The generation of story ideas: An exploratory study of gatekeeping in local television news. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Southern Speech Communication Association, Louisville, KY.

Wolf, N. (1993). Are opinions male? The barriers that shut women up. The New Republic, 209(22), 20-25.

Women directing radio news reach pay parity with men, lag in TV. (1993). Media Report to Women, 21(2), 1.

Women have lost ground in TV and newspaper coverage, Cal State study finds. (1992). Media Report to Women, 20(3), 6.

Women's work in the 1980s: Network bureau chief. (1986). Broadcasting, 78(1), 29-32.

Woodhull, N. (1992). Women and power: The audience of the future. The Quill, 80(7), 37.

Working press of the nation: TV & radio directory. (1993). New Providence, NJ: Reed Publishing (USA) Inc.

The world of AWRT: A profile of the membership of the American women in radio and television, Inc. (1984). Washington, DC: AWRT.

Zeigler, D., & White, A. (1990). Women and minorities on network television news: An examination of correspondents and newsmakers. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 34(2), 215-223.

Zoonen, L. V. (1992). Feminist theory and information technology. Media, Culture, & Society, 14(1), 9-30.

Table 1

Network Affiliates Producing News in the State of Florida and the Percentage of Women in Newsroom Management: Rank Ordered

STATION (AFFILIATE)	MARKET LOCATION	% OF WOMEN IN MGMT.
WTVT (CBS)	Tampa	0% (0 for 3)
WEAR (ABC)	Pensacola / Mobile	0% (0 for 3)
WESH (NBC)	Orlando	0% (0 for 3)
WPTV (NBC)	West Palm	0% (0 for 3)
WINK (CBS)	Fort Myers	0% (0 for 3)
WEVU (ABC)	Fort Myers	0% (0 for 1)
WTXL (ABC)	Tallahassee	0% (0 for 2)
WCJB (ABC)	Gainesville	0% (0 for 2)
WPLG (ABC)	Miami	0% (0 for 4)
WSVN (FOX)	Miami	20% (1 for 5)
WCPX (CBS)	Orlando	25% (1 for 4)
WMBB (ABC)	Panama City	25% (1 for 4)
WPEC (CBS)	West Palm	25% (1 for 4)*
WPBF (ABC)	West Palm	33% (1 for 3)
WTVJ (NBC)	Miami	33% (1 for 3)
WFTX (FOX)	Fort Myers	33% (1 for 3)
WJKS (ABC)	Jacksonville	33% (1 for 3)
WJXT (CBS)	Jacksonville	33% (1 for 3)*
WWSB (ABC)	Sarasota	33% (1 for 3)
WTSP (ABC)	St. Petersburg	33% (2 for 6)*
WFLA (NBC)	Tampa	40% (2 for 5)
WTLV (NBC)	Jacksonville	40% (2 for 5)
WBBH (NBC)	Fort Myers	50% (1 for 2)
WJHG (NBC)	Panama City	50% (1 for 2)
WFTV (ABC)	Orlando	66% (2 for 3)*
WCIX (CBS)	Miami	100% (3 for 3)

* Asterisk represents stations with one newsroom management position unfilled.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF FLORIDA TELEVISION AFFILIATES

Station/Channel/Affiliate

FORT MYERS/NAPLES
WFTX, CH. 36 (FOX)
WBBH, CH. 20 (NBC)
WINK, CH. 11 (CBS)
WEVU, CH. 26 (ABC)

GAINESVILLE/OCALA
WCJB, CH. 20 (ABC)
WOGX, CH. 51 (FOX)

JACKSONVILLE, FL/BRUNSWICK, GA
WAWS, CH. 30 (FOX)
WJKS, CH. 17 (ABC)
WJXT, CH. 4 (CBS)
WTLV, CH. 12 (NBC)

MIAMI/FORT LAUDERDALE
WCIX, CH. 6 (CBS)
WPLG, CH. 10 (ABC)
WSVN, CH. 7 (FOX)
WTVJ, CH. 4 (NBC)

MOBILE, AL/PENSACOLA, FL
WEAR, CH. 3 (ABC)
WJTC, CH. 44 (ABC/CBS)

ORLANDO/DAYTONA BEACH
WESH, CH. 2 (NBC)
WCPX, CH. 6 (CBS)
WFTV, CH. 9 (ABC)
WOFL, CH. 35 (FOX)

PANAMA CITY
WJHG, CH. 7 (NBC)
WPGX, CH. 28 (FOX)
WMBB, CH. 13 (ABC)

SARASOTA
WWSB, CH. 40 (ABC)

TALLAHASSEE, FL/THOMASVILLE, GA
WTWC, CH. 40 (NBC)
WTXL, CH. 27 (ABC)

TAMPA/ST PETERSBURG/CLEARWATER
WTSP, CH. 10 (ABC)
WFLA, CH. 8 (NBC)
WFTS, CH. 28 (FOX)
WTVT, CH. 13 (CBS)

WEST PALM BEACH/FORT PIERCE/VERO BEACH
WPBF, CH. 25 (ABC)
WPEC, CH. 12 (CBS)
WFLX, CH. 29 (FOX)
WPTV, CH. 5 (NBC)

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE SURVEY (FIRST PAGE AND EXAMPLE OF STORY MEASURE)

This is a survey of women's attitudes. We are trying to find out how you feel about the kinds of news stories that air on t-v stations across the state of Florida.

There are approximately 47 items on this survey. It should take you about twenty minutes to complete.

For each item on the survey, you will be asked to make two judgments. First, you will be asked to judge how interesting you find the story. Second, you will be asked to judge how interesting you think other women might find the same story.

You will make your judgments using a scale of 0-10, where:

Extremely Un-Interesting					Neither Interesting Extremely nor Un-Interesting					Interesting
⇓					⇓					⇓
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Each story on the survey is preceded by a number. Please disregard that number and simply circle your choices.

The following is an example of what each item should look like when you finish with the survey:

(401 075) The space shuttle Endeavour dropped its orbit today to get a better view of earth. The shuttle is mapping the planet using a sophisticated, 3-dimensional radar system. The crew plans to map 18-million square miles of the planet before it returns to earth next week.

How interesting or uninteresting do you find this story?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How interesting or uninteresting do you think other women would find this story?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Thank you for your participation in this study. This concludes your instructions. Please turn the page and begin.

(101 041) A West Palm Beach pilot is safe tonight after making an emergency landing on the beach. Neither the pilot no his passenger were injured. This is reportedly the second time he had to make an emergency landing in the same plane.

You: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Other Women: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

They'd Rather Be in Pictures, or Would They?: A Content Analysis of Video Bite Bias During TV Network News Coverage of the 1992 and 1996 Presidential Campaigns

by

Jon A. Shidler, Dennis T. Lowry, and Charles Kingsley

School of Journalism

Southern Illinois University

Carbondale, IL 62901

shidlerj@siu.edu

Jon A. Shidler is associate professor and Dennis T. Lowry is professor in the School of Journalism at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Charles Kingsley is a doctoral student at Michigan State University. The authors wish to thank Dr. Steve Banning and doctoral candidate Mystic Shih for assistance with coding.

They'd Rather Be in Pictures, or Would They?: A Content Analysis of Video Bite Bias During TV Network News Coverage of the 1992 and 1996 Presidential Campaigns

Abstract

In this study visual bias was evaluated in terms of total air time for each candidate; positive, neutral, and negative presentation of the candidates and their wives; and crowd reactions. The term "video bite" was used to draw a parallel with the established "sound bite" used in the analysis of candidates' words. A video bite was defined as a single uninterrupted visual (no cuts, wipes or dissolves) of a candidate, his family, or crowds. A total of 199 early evening newscasts were analyzed on ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC between the end of the last convention and election day for Campaigns 1992 and 1996. The overall conclusions were that video coverage of political candidates was not balanced; the liberal bias hypothesis was supported in both elections in terms of positive coverage, and that anti-incumbent bias was not evident in 1996. Positive coverage of all candidates far outweighed negative in both 1992 and 1996, reinforcing the concept "They'd rather be in pictures."

They'd Rather Be in Pictures, or Would They?: A Content Analysis of Video Bite Bias During TV Network News Coverage of the 1992 and 1996 Elections

The power of television lies with its ability to communicate through sight, sound, motion, and color-- the way viewers see life every day. Despite continually reduced ratings, network television continues to be the primary source of campaign information for the majority of voters during presidential election years--84% in 1992 and 57% in 1996.[1] Given the importance of the television medium in delivering information to voters, it is not surprising that many scholarly studies and articles have been devoted to network television news coverage. A number of these have focused on "sound bites," and their length. Hallin, in a twenty-year longitudinal study of newscasts discovered that the average length shrunk from a mean of 43.1 seconds in '68 to 8.9 seconds in '88.[2] Similar results were found by Smith[3] , and reported on by Adatto[4] and Stephens.[5] As Lowry and Shidler pointed out, "The net result of the shrinking sound bite is that while viewers see and hear more of the network correspondents and the noncandidates who are interviewed, they see and hear less of the candidates themselves."[6]

In addition to sound bite length, the subject of liberal bias in television coverage of campaigns has been addressed in several studies.[7] Soley states that, "Despite claims to objectivity, research does show that there are systematic biases in the selection of sources by journalists."[8] The net result, according to Gibson and Zillman, is that, "The journalist, in being able to choose which points of view to represent with direct quotation in a news story, is thus vested with considerable power."[9] Kerbel states, "Two things are necessary to demonstrate liberal bias: First, there must be evidence that the more conservative candidate received worse coverage than his or her opponents, and second, if such evidence exists, the values and attitudes of those responsible for election news must be proven as the cause."[10] Long-time CBS news correspondent Bernard Goldberg confessed, "The old argument that the networks and other "media elites" have a liberal bias is so blatantly true that its hardly worth discussing anymore....It comes naturally to most reporters."[11] Supporting evidence for this bias claim appears in the 1992 Lowry and Shidler study: "By far the highest and most consistent negative net scores [positive minus negative spoken by noncandidates] were given to Bush-Quayle, a finding consistent with charges of political bias...."[12] This conclusion was based on the sound bites of "others"--spokespersons and government officials--not on the candidates' comments. It appears that the networks were extremely sensitive to possible bias criticism, and gave each [major] candidate an equal amount of time on the air, but did not provide equal treatment in terms of supporters and detractors of each candidate.

An alternative to the liberal bias charge is that of the "anti-incumbent bias hypothesis of political scientist Doris Graber: "Incumbents typically receive harsher treatment than challengers because their records in office always provide targets for criticism."[13] A recent study by Lowry and Shidler found that , "Instead of supporting the anti-incumbent bias hypothesis, the results are consistent with a hypothesis of liberal news bias."[14]

The Need for Visual Analysis

The standard measurements of bias in past sound bite studies have included the amount of air time each candidate receives, and the number of positive and negative comments made about or by each candidate. However, in 1987 Graber called for inclusion of visual analysis in future content studies of TV news:

> Above all, research concerned with the meaning conveyed by television news content must include the visual aspects of messages. Concentrating solely on the verbal aspects leads to serious distortions. Claims made in the past about the content of television news on the basis of purely verbal analysis are dubious.
>
> Wholesale questioning of previous content analysis findings makes it imperative to undertake new audio-visually oriented research to discover what messages television newscasts actually transmit to various audiences.[15]

One reason sound bite studies have been popular, is the relative ease with which they can be conducted. Each candidate sound bite is an easily identifiable and measurable unit. Visual analysis is much more difficult to identify and interpret. As Graber pointed out, "Visual content of television election news has been largely ignored by political scientists thus far, primarily because is has been difficult to code."[16]

A brief review of key studies involving video coding and analysis reveals the inherent problems of visual coding. Kepplinger[17] measured visual biases in television campaign coverage in Germany in 1976. His principle measurement for visuals relied on coding by professional cameramen. Once the professionals had established standard camera positions --e.g., clear bottom view (negative), eye level (positive), and clear top view (negative), direction (front, side and back), and types of shots ranging from extreme close up (ECU) to long shot, the campaign coverage was coded in terms of positive and negative shots. Results of a questionnaire completed by 151 cameraman were used as criteria for evaluating the positive and negative images of the candidates (436). Positive and negative reactions of the public to the telecasts were measured, first by using journalists' statements reporting the reactions, and then by analyzing the visual display of public reactions on television.

Grabe[18] conducted a visual bias content analysis of the South African Broadcasting Corporation's coverage of the 1987 and 1989 elections, using shot length, camera angle, camera/lens movement and editing as criteria. Each of the structural features presented in the telecast was identified in terms of positive or negative bias in the presentation of the candidates. She studied a total of 62 rubrics. A rubric was defined as "approximately one-half hour program segments which were broadcast as part of the only primetime national news program, Network, over approximately a three month period preceding general elections."[19] These were coded by three television producers who also contributed to the design of the coding of seven categories of visual bias.

In their study of the 1984 and 1988 network TV coverage of the presidential campaigns, Windhauser and Evarts,[20] measured the total coverage of each party, including: number of stories; issues; positive, negative and neutral stories about each candidate, and visual appeals. Visual appeal was based on identification visuals (slides), family, style (of candidate), crowds, special interest groups, and scenes with political supporters.[21] Among the conclusions, "Identification visuals, as in the 1984 campaigns, accounted for more than a quarter of the total visuals....Besides the identification visuals, crowds, special-interest groups, and scenes with political reporters were the appeals used most frequently for both parties."[22] "Although these results suggest consistency in news coverage, they illustrate that a higher volume of news coverage in either election race did not necessarily mean favorable coverage. More importantly, when the directional categories were combined, the differences in volume and proportional differences in coverage between the parties was not that distinct."[23]

Graber identified in detail the numerous problems associated with visual coding, and offered a coding system based on the meanings conveyed by the total message.

> I call my approach "gestalt" coding because it focuses on the totality of meanings that results from the interaction of verbal and visual story elements, external settings, and the decoding proclivities of the news audience. The major factors considered during gestalt coding are (1) the general political context prevailing at the time of the broadcast, (2) the anchor's lead in and subsequent anchor and reporter verbal and non-verbal editorializing; (3) the audio-visual message conveyed by the combination of words, non-verbal sounds, and pictures; and (4) the interactive effect among episodes within the same news story and among the stories in the same newscast.[24]

In terms of some of the measurable effects of visuals, Graber found that, "...visual themes are remembered and learned more readily than verbal themes," and, "visuals allowed them to form more complete and accurate impressions of people and events."[25] Her research further indicates that, "...the picture aspects of audiovisual presentations tend to be more potent than verbal messages that contradict picture meanings. As long as seeing is believing, good pictures will remain the trump cards of the television age."[26]

A 1997 study measuring the relative influence of audio alone versus video alone versus combined audiovisual presentations of presidential candidates in the 1992 campaign was conducted by Lowry.[27] Subjects were exposed to either audio, video, or audiovisual newscasts, and were asked to evaluate candidates in terms of perceived attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, based upon the taped presentations. Results of this study clearly indicated that the visual message (how they looked), was significantly more important and persuasive than the audio message (what they said), supporting the findings of the Graber study. "'Is how they look more important than what they say?' Based upon the four candidates tested, and the subjects used in this experiment, the answer is a resounding 'Yes'."[28]

While both Graber and Lowry found the video message to be more persuasive than the audio, a study by Crigler, Just and Neuman[29] indicated the opposite. This study measured the cognitive effects across three groups of 30 subjects each, who were shown, or heard, two stimulus stories for each of four issues adapted from network evening news stories. One group saw only the visual stories, one heard only the sound track from the stories, a third viewed and heard the stories intact. Among the findings, "In the cognitive domain, the audio channel is evaluated as significantly more powerful than the visual channel. In the affective domain, however, the only significant finding is that the combination of audio and visual channels is seen as more powerful than the visual channel alone."[30] These results, showing stronger impact on those exposed to audio than video, did not confirm those in Graber's study.

Crigler et al. qualified these results, saying, "Our data, however, speak specifically to cases in which there is no intentional conflict between the audio and visual channels, i.e., the case of most television news stories. In those instances, the audio track is more likely to be coherent and convey meaning to the audience than the visuals."[31]

The above examples indicate the problems, and a variety of approaches to solve them, in assessing the role and value of visual images in television. A variety of criteria, methods and coders has been used to determine positive, neutral and negative impressions. Recognizing the need for and importance of more video analysis studies, this study attempts to address some of the concerns identified in previous studies, borrowing elements and categories from several sources. Visual presentations will be analyzed on the basis of network presentation of candidates in newscasts. The 1992 and 1996 campaigns offered a number of opportunities for evidence of liberal bias and anti-incumbent bias, by measuring total video exposure and positive, negative and neutral video presentations of the candidates. Additionally, the two campaigns featured a Republican incumbent against a lesser-known challenger, and a Democratic incumbent against a well-known, long-term national political figure.

Purposes of the Study

To analyze four networks' coverage of the 1992 and 1996 presidential campaigns in terms of video exposure of candidates and their families during early evening newscasts.

To evaluate the overall impression of the candidates' visual presentation in early evening network newscasts.

Research Questions

1. Did the networks provide balanced video coverage of the candidates and their families in terms of total seconds in Campaigns '92 and '96?
2. Was there evidence of liberal bias in the video coverage of either election?
3. Was there evidence of anti-incumbent bias in the video coverage of either election?

Method

Sample. The content universe for this study consisted of all weeknights from 24 August through 30 October 1992, and 3 September through 1 November 1996. This period constituted ten full weeks in 1992 and nine full weeks in 1996 between the end of the last national convention and election day. A simple random sample was drawn consisting of 25 early evening network newscasts from ABC, CBS, CNN and NBC. Only the first half hour (5-5:30 p.m. central time) of the CNN World Today program was included in 1992. Due to a recording error, a total of 99 newscasts was analyzed in 1992. Because of a very low number of campaign '96 stories on CNN's World View news program (5:00-5:30 p.m. CDT) from September 3rd through October 14th, a decision was made to substitute CNN's Prime News program (7:00-7:30 p.m. CDT) from October 5th through November 1st.

All 199 newscasts were viewed in entirety by the authors to locate presidential and vice presidential campaign stories. A campaign story was defined as being primarily about the campaign . All campaign stories were then transferred onto separate network tapes to facilitate coding.

Evaluation was determined by:

Total video exposure of each candidate and family.

Positive, negative, neutral and balanced presentations to the viewing audience within campaign stories.

Crowd reaction to candidate's and family's appearance.

Video Content Categories.

The basic unit of analysis was the video bite. Use of the term "bite" is not limited to sound. In his discussion of visual formats Griffin states:

> "Image bites," knit together by scripted narration, are far more common than the interview "sound bites" that have been given greater attention in news research. The construction and use of visual symbols provides a relatively unquestioned "reality" base, which enhances the perceived validity of specific reports and legitimates the authority of reporters and anchors as arbiters of the "facts."[32]

The term "video bite" was used to draw a parallel with the familiar "sound bite" used in the analysis of a candidate's words. A video bite was defined as a single, uninterrupted visual from a single camera perspective. Any video transition (cut, wipe or dissolve) indicated a new video bite. Each video bite was identified and coded as positive, negative, or neutral. For the purpose of this study, the visual exposure of three subject categories were studied: candidates, candidates' families, and crowd/audience response. All video coverage of these were timed, analyzed, and classified in an effort to determine the amount and type of video exposure given.

The following categories were adapted from previous studies by Kepplinger,[33] Windhauser & Evarts,[34] Lowry and Shidler[35] ,and Metallinos[36] .

Subject Categories

(1) Candidates: All shots of Bush/Quayle, Clinton/Gore, and Perot/Stockdale in '92; and Clinton/Gore, Dole/Kemp and Perot/Choate in '96. These were further defined according to:

a. Identification shots--Slides or still photos of candidates used for visual identification, usually as background behind on-camera news anchors to introduce story. All ID shots of candidates shown in conjunction with poll results. These were coded "neutral" because candidates are treated equally.

b. Action shots--All other visuals of candidate speaking to audiences, usually in motion. When multiple candidates appeared in a single shot, split screen, or multiple images, only one shot was recorded, but each candidate was coded individually.

(2) Family: All visuals of candidates with family members (on stage, or entering/ leaving transportation or buildings), and all visuals of family members alone. In situations where the candidate was predominantly featured

(e.g. candidate at podium, family member visible in background, sitting on stage) the shot was coded as "candidate."

(3) Crowd/audience: The importance of including crowd reactions as well as those of supporters and special interest groups is documented in both the Kepplinger, and Windhauser and Evarts studies. In video analysis the candidate's words are not heard, and his expressions and demeanor are often serious. Crowd reactions identify positive acceptance by cheering, smiling, waving of signs. Serious expressions indicate attention to the speaker, (neutral), while lack of interest, or presence of protester signs and sign waving indicate negative reactions. Therefore, this study coded all visuals of crowds gathered to see and/or hear candidates, and special interest groups and demonstrators for or against a candidate.

a. Crowd with candidate: All shots of a candidate interacting with audience--shaking hands before or after a speech, entering/leaving a site, mounting or exiting stage, airplane or auto. (Included were all long shots from stage or back of location showing audience view of candidates). When a candidate was visible, he was identified and coded in the "Candidate" and "Video" categories.

b. Crowd shot without candidate: The candidate was identified in the "Candidate" category. The "Video" category was "0". If candidate was not clearly identified visually, audio was used to identify him. For example, when there were long shots of protesters or marchers with no identifiable setting.

The majority of the crowd shots were positive, since they depicted supporters gathered for staged events on the campaign trail. However, protesters and crowd scenes during speeches displayed negative reactions as well.

Communications Context

Windhauser and Evarts addressed the political parties staging of events for television, and use of supporters and special interest groups in presenting favorable or unfavorable images. They stated, "The heavy network news coverage on advertisements used by the parties and the campaigns as staged media events explained the drastic issue changes between the 1984 and 1988 race. Campaign ads were shown in news packages as 'sound bites'."[37]

Campaign shots: All campaign stump speeches, other prepared campaign speeches (e.g. to groups such as the NAACP or the VFW), and all informal chatting with voters on the campaign trail. Since the candidate is (usually) in control and among friends, the environment and image are generally considered positive.

Commercial shots: Visuals lifted from the candidates' commercials. When a commercial ran uninterrupted, it was coded as a single shot, even if several shots appeared within the commercial. Therefore, the coding for this category was an exception to the basic definition. This decision was based on the fact that commercials were shown and analyzed in news stories as a single message unit. Individual shots within the commercial were often a combination of "news," "historical," or 'other," in context, usually selected to create a specific positive or negative image.

News shots: consisted primarily of statements made to members of the press--whether answering a single reporter's question on the campaign trail, or in a large press conference, or in private one-on-one news interviews.

Debate shots: Visuals lifted from the presidential or vice-presidential debates.

Historical shots: Visuals from prior campaigns or other political activity. Any visuals identified as prior to 1996 were coded as historical.

Other shots: Any activity not covered in the above environments.

Visual Impression

The distinction between positive, neutral and negative image has been considered a valid method of coding in several past studies. For this study the following criteria were used in making the determination.

Candidate bites were coded as positive, neutral, or negative based on a combination of camera angle and appearance. When multiple candidates appeared in a single shot, split screen, or multiple images, only one shot was recorded, but each candidate was coded individually.

Camera positions and angles considered were: close-up (head and shoulders), medium (waist up), full (full figure) and long shot; eye level, tilt up or tilt down; and high angle or low angle.

Appearance included: candidate's demeanor, delivery, attitude and posture. Visual coding was based on the predominance of elements which appeared in each shot.

Neutral: Medium or full shot, eye level; candidate's expression serious, intent, or passive.

Positive: Close-up or medium shot, tilt up or low angle; confident, smiling, relaxed, enthusiastic.

Negative: Long shot, tilt down, high angle; candidate's expression angry, tense, tired, tentative.

Crowd Reaction

Crowd reaction was coded as neutral, positive, negative, or balanced.

Neutral: Listening but with no expression or reaction.

Positive: Hands raised, smiling, cheering, positive (supportive) signs, banners

Negative: Thumbs down, taunting, frowning, anti or protesting signs, banners

Balanced: Mixed--smiling/frowning, cheering/booing, both positive and negative signs and banners.

Coding was done by the authors and two graduate students. A random subsample of five evenings was coded to determine intercoder agreement. Overall coder proportion of agreement was .91. Individual categories were coded in all six areas, ranging from .82 to 1.00. The lowest levels of agreement occurred in Candidate Impressions (.85) and Crowd Reactions (.82).

Results

In terms of total election coverage, 1996 was down substantially from 1992.

Insert Table 1 About Here

As Table 1 shows, the total number of stories dropped from 359 to 193 (-46%), and the total number of seconds dropped from 39,833 to 15,571 (-61%). In terms of total video coverage of candidates, there were 55% fewer video bites, and

49% fewer total seconds of coverage. Put another way, the networks devoted less than half as much news time to election coverage in 1996 as in 1992.

Insert Table 2 About Here

Research question one asked, "Did the networks provide balanced video coverage of the presidential candidates in the 1992 and 1996 campaigns? Table 2 reveals that in 1992 the incumbents, Bush-Quayle, received 16% more video time than the challengers, Clinton-Gore. In 1996 the challengers, Dole-Kemp, were seen 34% more than the incumbents, Clinton-Gore. Thus, in terms of total air time, the Republicans received significantly more exposure in both elections.

Whereas the Lowry and Shidler study found the sound bite times to be almost equal in 1992 (1,283 seconds for Bush, 1,130 for Clinton), video exposure was significantly greater for Bush-Quayle (1,028 shots, 7,093 seconds) versus Clinton-Gore (876 shots, 6,132 seconds). In 1996, Dole-Kemp received 4,073 seconds, of air time, Clinton-Gore 3,008 total seconds.

Insert Table 3 About Here

Research questions two and three asked if there was evidence of liberal bias and anti-incumbent bias in the video coverage in total seconds:" Approximately 60% of the candidate impressions in both elections were rated neutral. Between positive and negative impressions, the positive comments significantly outnumbered negatives in both elections for all candidates. In 1992, the incumbents (Bush-Quayle) received 34% positive coverage and 5% negative, and the challengers (Clinton-Gore) 38% positive and 2% negative. In 1996, the incumbents (Clinton-Gore) 38% positive and 1% negative, the challengers (Dole-Kemp) 33% positive and 7% negative. In terms of total coverage, the liberal bias hypothesis was not supported in either election. However, the positive/negative coverage indicated a liberal bias in both elections. Windhauser and Evarts found the overall coverage of the candidates to be positive in 1984 and 1988, and this study confirmed that finding. They also emphasized that more coverage doesn't necessarily mean better. This was also confirmed in this study. In 1992 and 1996 the Republicans received more air time than the Democrats, but a lower percentage of positive impressions in both elections, supporting the liberal bias hypothesis. The anti-incumbent bias hypothesis was not supported in 1996.

Insert Table 4 About Here

Unlike the majority of neutral visuals shown in "Candidate Impressions", "Crowd Reactions" shown for the candidates were overwhelmingly positive: 69% for the incumbents and 64% for the challengers in 1992, 57% for the incumbents and 62% for the challengers in 1996. This can be accounted for by the television coverage of the staging of events noted earlier in Windhauser and Evarts. The vast majority of the candidate visuals occurred in the "Campaign" context. With few exceptions, crowds were shown listening to prepared speeches on the campaign trail, or meeting candidates prior to or immediately following the campaign speech.

Conclusions

This study combined coding design elements from several previous studies and measured positive, negative, and neutral video impressions presented to the viewers. It is important to understand the video, as well as the audio components' contribution to the total viewer impressions. This is particularly important in light of the varying research indicating either video or audio as the dominant element in communication.

More research needs to be done to answer the question of what creates the final impression. The gestalt technique measures the cognitive result, but cannot answer "why?", without analyzing components. This is particularly important when there are conflicting messages between audio and video, as Crigler et. al, noted in their study.

Since this study measured visual exposure and impressions of the candidates and their families, no direct comparisons can be made to previously discussed studies in this paper. Lowry and Shidler found sound bite coverage between the presidential candidates in 1992 to be fairly balanced. Our findings indicate that the video coverage was significantly greater for the incumbents (Republicans). In addition, while positive videos of candidates far outweighed the negatives in this study, Lowry and Shidler found evidence of bias in sound bites from "other" spokespersons, reinforcing the need for the gestalt technique in evaluating all elements of television news campaign coverage.

A 50% drop in network TV early evening news coverage of the presidential campaign is significant, and calls into question the viewers' primary source of television news. One possibility is that the 1996 election was not deemed all that interesting to viewers, so the networks elected not to cover it in as much detail. However, there are now many more news program options available to the candidates. There were indications in the 1992 election that candidates were turning to other program types to communicate their messages. Larry King Live, morning news programs, and other TV talk shows were used frequently by Perot and Clinton. News programs such as

Dateline and Primetime are now a regular part of primetime television, with some scheduled as much as four times per week. Additionally, during the course of coding for this study, the authors were exposed to numerous promotions for special programs featuring in-depth conversations with candidates and their families. If this trend continues, these programs must be considered in future research concerning network TV election coverage.

Positive and negative impressions are the key to identifying bias in news coverage. While a variety of techniques and coding methods have been used in various studies, the results continue to be subject to coder impressions. Two problems identified in this study concerned differentiating between "Candidate" and "Crowd" video bites when both were present, and differenttiating between "Neutral" and "Positive" or "Negative." Unless there was obvious evidence of positive (smiling, cheering) or negative (frowning, angry) visuals were coded as neutral.

Identification shots used behind the anchor during stories, or with poll results, were coded as neutral even though Clinton is perceived as more charismatic visually. ID shots accounted for 11-15% of the candidate visuals, compared to the 25% noted in the Windhauser and Evarts study. These visuals may become more important in future studies if, as Lowry and Shidler (1992) indicated, viewers see and hear more of the network correspondents and less of the candidates themselves.

Crigler et. al.,[38] recount CBS reporter Leslie Stahl's experience with the Reagan administration's reaction to an intentionally negative story aired on CBS. The administration's response indicated that the visual story was a strong positive statement for the Reagan administration; and upon reviewing the story without sound, Stahl concurred. Their study later refuted the claim that visuals override audio communication. In the present study, however, the high percentage of positive visual presentations of major candidates in both the 1992 and 1996 presidential elections, added to the positive findings of the Windhauser and Evarts study of 1984 and 1988 election coverage, supported the notion that presidential candidates really should rather be in pictures.

Table 1

1992 and 1996 Presidential Campaigns Video Bites by Year

	1992	1996
Total # Stories	359	193
Total Story Length (Sec.)	39,833	15,571
Total Video Bites	2,938	1,311
Total Length (Sec.)	16,423	8,429

Table 2

Number of Video Bites and Total Bite Length for Incumbents and Challengers in Campaigns '92 and '96

	1992		1996	
	# Video Bites	Seconds	#Video Bites	Seconds
Incumbents	1,028	7,093	376	3,008
Challengers	876	6,137	529	4,073

Table 3

Percentage of Candidate Impressions by Total Length in Seconds

Candidates	Visual Impressions	1992 Seconds	1996 Seconds
		(N=7,046)	(N=2,984)
Incumbents	Neutral Bites	60.6%	60.5%
	Positive Bites	34.4	38.1
	Negative Bites	5.0	1.4
	Total	100.0%	100.0%
		(N=5,997)	(N=4,087)
Challengers	Neutral Bites	59.4%	60.1%
	Positive Bites	38.2	33.0
	Negative Bites	2.4	6.9
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

Table 4

Percentage of Crowd Reaction Impressions by Total Length in Seconds

Candidates	Visual Impressions	1992 Seconds	1996 Seconds
		(N=716)	(N=345)
Incumbents	Neutral Bites	24.9%	20.6%
	Positive Bites	68.9	57.4
	Negative Bites	2.0	22.0
	Balanced Bites	4.3	---
	Total	100.1%*	100.0%
		(N=804)	(N=503)
Challengers	Neutral Bites	31.3%	34.6%
	Positive Bites	59.6	62.4
	Negative Bites	---	2.4
	Balanced Bites	9.1	0.6
	Total	100.0%	100.0%

*Does not total 100% due to normal rounding error.

NOTES

1 "Campaign '96 Gets Lower Grades from Voters," (Washington, DC: The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, 15 November, 1996), 20.

2 Daniel C. Hallin, "Sound Bite News: Television Coverage of the Elections, 1968-1988," Journal of Communication 42 (spring 1992), 6.

[3] William Edward Smith, "The Shrinking Sound Bite: Two Decades of Stylistic Evolution in Television News," (paper delivered at AEJMC Annual Convention, Washington, DC, August 1989).

[4] Kiku Adatto, The Incredible Shrinking Sound Bite," The New Republic, 28 May 1990, 20.

[5] Michael Stephens, The Open Mike...On Shrinking Soundbites," Columbia Journalism Review, (September-October 1996): 35 n3, 22.

[6] Dennis T. Lowry and Jon A. Shidler, "The Sound Bites, the Biters, and the Bitten: An Analysis of Network TV News Bias in Campaign '92," Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly, 72 (spring 1995): 33.

[7] Cf. Richard Hofstetter, Bias in the News: Network Television News Coverage of the 1972 Election Campaign (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1976); Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan, Over the Wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in Campaign 80, (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1983), Dennis T. Lowry, "Measures of Network TV News Bias in Campaign '84" (paper presented at the Annual Convention of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Memphis, TN, August 1985); James H. Kuklinski and Lee Siegelman, " When Objectivity is Not Objective: Network Television News Coverage of U.S. Senators and the "Paradox of Objectivity'," The Journal of Politics 54 (August 1992): 810-833.

[8] Lawrence C. Soley, The News Shapers: The Sources Who Shape the News, (New York: Praeger, 1992): 17.

[9] Rhonda Gibson and Dolf Zillman, The Impact of Quotations in News Reports on Issue Perception," Journalism Quarterly 70 (winter 1993): 800.

[10] Matthew Robert Kerbel, Edited for Television: CNN, ABC, and American Presidential Elections, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998): 199.

[11] Bernard Goldberg, "Networks Need a Reality Check," Wall Street Journal, 13 February, 1996, A14.

[12] Lowry and Shidler, "The Sound Bites, the Biters, and the Bitten," 39.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

---

[13] Doris A. Graber, Mass Media and American Politics, 5th ed. (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1997): 249.

[14] Dennis T. Lowry and Jon A. Shidler, "The Sound Bites, the Biters, and the Bitten: A Two-Campaign Test of the Anti-Incumbent Bias Hypothesis in Network TV News, (paper presented at BEA National Convention, Los Vegas, Nevada, April 1998) 13.

[15] Doris A. Graber, "Television News Without Pictures?" Critical Studies in Mass Communication 4 (March 1987): 77.

[16] Doris A. Graber, "Researching the Mass-Media Elections Interface: A Political Science Perspective," Mass Communication Review, (1987): 7.

[17] Hans Mathias Kepplinger, "Visual Biases in Television Campaign Coverage," Communication Research, 9 (3), (1982): 432-446.

[18] Maria Elizabeth Grabe, "The South African Broadcasting Corporation's Coverage of the 1987 and 1989 Elections: The Matter of Visual Bias," Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media, 40, (1996): 153-179.

[19] Ibid., 155.

[20] John W. Windhauser and Dru Riley Evarts, "Watching the Campaigns on Network Television," in The Media and the 1984 and 1988 Presidential Campaigns, (eds.) Guido H. Stemple III and John W. Windhauser, (Westport CN: Greenwood Press, 1991). 88.

[21] Ibid., 88.

[22] Ibid., 87.

[23] Ibid., 93.

[24] Graber, "Television News Without Pictures?", 74-75.

[25] Doris A. Graber, "Seeing is Remembering: How Visuals Contribute to Learning from Television News," Journal of Communication 40 (summer 1990): 146.

[26] Doris A. Graber, "Kind Pictures and Harsh Words: How Television Presents the Candidates," in K. L. Schlozman (ed.), Elections in America, (Boston: Allen & Unwin, Inc., 1987): 140.

[27] Dennis T. Lowry, "Political Candidate Sound Bites vs. Video Bites in Network Television News: Is How They Look More Important Than What they Say?"

(paper presented at AEJMC Anual Convention (Radio-Television Division), Chicago, 1997.

[28] Ibid., 10.

[29] Ann Crigler, Marion Just, and W. Russel Neuman, "Interpreting Visual Versus Audio Messages in Television News," Journal of Communication 44 (autumn 1994): 132-149.

[30] Ibid., 145

[31] Ibid., 147.

[32] Michael Griffin, "Looking at TV News: Strategies for Research." Communication, (1992, Vol. 13): 133.

[33] Kepplinger, 435-436.

[34] Windhauser and Evarts, 87-88.

[35] Lowry and Shidler, 35-36.

[36] Nikos Metallinos, Television Aesthetics: Perceptual, Cognitive, and Compositional Bases, (Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum Associates, 1996).

[37] Windhauser and Evarts, 73.

[38] Crigler, et. al., 132.

The Relationship of Affiliation Change to Changes in Television News Ratings

Marianne Barrett, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Telecommunication
Arizona State University
Box 1305
Tempe, AZ 85287-1305
(602) 965-6612 or (602) 965-5011
email: marianne@asu.edu

"The Relationship of Affiliation Change to Changes in Television News Ratings"
Abstract

This study uses Nielsen ratings data from February 1994, 1995 and 1996 to examine the relationship between network affiliation change and changes in ratings for local and network television news. The key finding is that, contrary to what was expected, there is a significant negative relationship between a change in local news ratings and affiliation change, particularly a change to Fox, but that no such relationship exists for network news programs.

"The Relationship of Affiliation Change to Changes in Television News Ratings"

INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, television has become the primary source of news and information for the American public. Additionally, there is evidence to suggest that local broadcast news is particularly important to viewers. In one of the few studies of the effects of affiliation change Wakshlag, Driscoll, Agostino and Terry (1983) discovered that viewers were more loyal to a station's local newscast than to a network's national newscast. More recently, ***Broadcasting and Cable*** (1996, p. 44) noted, "[V]iewer loyalty to TV personalities, including local news anchors, doesn't change easily. A survey of [those] who take the pulse of the local TV business were hard pressed to come up with more than a handful of stations that have moved up from number two or three. . .to number one in the last three years." The three-year period mentioned in the latter article was a critical one for broadcasting as it was a time of unprecedented change.

That change was precipitated by the May 1994 announcement of New World Communications Group, Inc. that it would switch the affiliation of its twelve television stations from one of the three traditional networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) to Fox. By December 1994, that announcement had led to affiliation changes in more than thirty markets across the United States (Zier, 1994). Among the questions raised by the changes is what effect did they have on local and network news ratings. A related question is does the conventional wisdom regarding news viewing hold true when affiliations change? This study uses February 1994, 1995 and 1996 Nielsen ratings data for each of the affected markets to begin to answer those questions.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

What factors influence news viewing? Are they different from those that influence viewing in general? With respect to overall viewing, researchers have identified several factors that impact audience behavior. These include structural ones and a program's performance in the past.

Structural factors refer to the relatively constant array of channels, choices and content available in a given place and time (McQuail, 1997). They include audience availability, the number of competing options that viewers have at any given time and the extent to which two adjacent programs have an audience in common (Barwise, 1986; Cooper, 1996; Webster 1985; Webster & Lichty, 1991; Webster & Phalen, 1997; Webster & Wang, 1992). Of these factors, perhaps the most significant is audience availability.

Audience Availability

In a 1988 study Barwise and Ehrenberg noted that the size of the television audience follows recurring daily patterns and that a major influence on people's viewing is their availability to view at a given time. Webster and Lichty (1991) underscore the importance of audience availability in predicting ratings and note that patterns of availability may provide an explanation for the disparity between stated program preferences and viewing behavior. Levels of viewing vary significantly by time of day, by season and by day of the week. Webster and Phalen (1997, p. 24) state, "nationwide television use is the highest in January and February [and] prime time television audiences are higher on weekdays and Sundays than on Fridays and Saturdays." It is also widely believed that, although there are fewer viewers in non-prime time dayparts, the viewers who watch during those times of the day are more regularly available than prime time audiences and as a result, tend to watch more consistently. Webster and Wang (1992) found evidence of this and noted that structural factors, particularly availability, are the most important correlates of habitual viewing.

Number of Choices

As noted above, in addition to audience availability, the number of choices that a viewer has also impacts program performance. For example, Webster (1985) found a strong inverse relationship between the number of program options available at the interface between two programs and the extent to which the audience for an earlier program also watched a subsequent one. While Webster was referring to the number of different programs that began at the same time, this finding should be applicable to the number of overall choices available to the viewer. The latter was confirmed by Barwise (1986 p. 13) who reported "that as viewing is spread across a large number of channels, ratings . . . on the main networks tend to decrease" and by Webster and Phalen (1997).

Inheritance Effects

The third structural factor often found to affect program performance is inheritance effects or the degree to which the audience for one program stays to watch a subsequent one. While the present study does not consider inheritance effects, because it is an important component of ratings research, it is reviewed here.

In their seminal work on the television audience, Goodhardt, Ehrenberg and Collins (1975) found that consecutive or near-consecutive programs on the same channel on the same evening shared their audiences to an above-normal extent but that audience inheritance did not extend to programs further apart.

Besides finding a strong inverse relationship between inheritance effects and number of options available at the interface between two programs as discussed above, Webster (1985) also noted a high degree of audience overlap across all pairs of adjacent programs. Rust (1986), Barwise & Ehrenberg (1988) and Rust, Kamakura & Alpert (1992) attributed much of this overlap to the fact that people tend to watch television in sessions that span several programs rather than to any particular characteristic of the programs themselves. This is in line with Webster and Wakshlag's (1983) model of program choice which posited that availability, the structure of the available program options and program content should affect audience duplication between two adjacent programs.

In their investigation of audience inheritance in an age of increased cable and VCR penetration, Walker (1988) and Davis and Walker (1990) found that increased choice had an unexpected effect on inheritance. Walker (1988) found that while these effects decreased as cable, VCR and remote control device penetrations increased between 1982 and 1985, there had been an increase in inheritance between 1979 and 1982. He speculated that the audience lost to technological innovation in the late 1970s left behind less adventurous viewers, those more inclined to stick with one channel--hence the increase in inheritance. As remote controls proliferated in the early 1980s, inheritance effects diminished as expected. Two years later in an extension of Walker's original study, Davis and Walker (1990) confirmed the drop in inheritance effects from 1983 to 1985 but observed another puzzling increase between 1986 and 1988. This time the researchers hypothesized that the same, less adventurous viewers went back to their familiar habits after the novelty of television remote control wore off, or that such network programming maneuvers such as seamless transitions between shows, had been successful in retaining audiences (Davis & Walker, 1990).

Program Performance

While structural factors significantly impact program performance, Goodhardt, Ehrenberg and Collins (1975) found that the primary indicator of whether the audience for one program also watches another is the ratings for those programs. Barwise and Ehrenberg (1988 at 36) confirmed this noting, "for pairs of programs on different days and different channels, the duplication of program B with program A is generally equal to the rating of A." While the researchers here were referring to pairs of adjacent programs, it would be reasonable to expect that the performance of an individual program at one time would be a strong predictor of its subsequent performance. The relationship between program history and future ratings is an example of "double jeopardy," a term used by William N. McPhee (1963) to describe the twofold disadvantage incurred by an unpublicized alternative--few people are aware of it, and they rarely choose it.

Several researchers have found evidence of this effect, noting that viewers of highly-rated programs are more likely than viewers of low-rated programs to watch those programs consistently (Barwise, 1986; Ehrenberg, Goodhardt & Barwise, 1990;

Goodhardt et al. 1975; Webster & Phalen 1997). Further, viewers who frequently watch the original airing of episodes of regularly scheduled television series also watch repeats of those episodes (Litman & Kohl, 1992). But, program particulars may be less important than other factors in predicting ratings.

For example, Adams and Eastman (1997 at 112) posit, "the history of ratings for the time slot a program fills may be the strongest measure of how that program will perform over time." Adams and Eastman explain, "after all a 'history' takes into account such factors as the competition, the leads in and out on all channels, the network's myths and policies, and the public's viewing habits and expectations" (1997, p. 112). This also seems to correlate with the finding that audience availability is a key variable in understanding and predicting viewing behavior.

Structural Factors and the News Audience

Whether the structural factors described above, or others, impact news ratings has been the subject of several previous studies. For example, Webster and Newton (1988) found, as expected, that there was a significant positive correlation between local news ratings and the size of the available audience and a negative correlation between news audiences and the number of commercial independent stations in the market and UHF channel assignment. But, contrary to expectations, the relationship between cable penetration and ratings was positive, though insignificant.

With respect to the relationship between network and local news ratings, Webster and Newton found a greater degree of correlation between the two when the local news led into the network news. This suggests "that the overall relationship between the network news and local news was determined more by the strength of the local news than vice versa" (Webster & Newton, 1988, p. 386).

Lin (1992) also found evidence of an association in viewers' news preferences between a particular network and its affiliates. "As expected, carry-over effects between adjacent or similar programs are indeed an important factor for program selection, as more than half of all viewers favored the newscast from a particular network and its affiliate" (Lin 1992, p. 381). In addition to this carry-over effect, Lin also found that viewers frequently cited "habit" as a reason for their selection of one news program over another. The latter finding coincides with that of Wulfmeyer (1983) who in his study of viewers' preferences for particular news content found that 12 percent of the viewers surveyed reported watching the news program they did primarily out of habit.

Cable and News Ratings

As noted above, one of the findings of Webster and Newton's 1988 study was that contrary to expectations, the relationship between cable penetration and ratings was positive, though insignificant. This unexpected finding suggests that even though it is reasonable to expect cable, with its plethora of channels, to have a negative impact on news ratings, particularly local news ratings, the relationship is not a clear-cut one. Other studies reinforce this.

For example, in their study of viewing in Bryan-College Station, Texas, Hill and Dyer (1981) found significant diversion from local television news to distant signal local news. But, Becker, Dunwoody and Rafaeli (1983) found no such diversion in their study of cable's impact on news use in Columbus, Ohio. In fact, they noted "the general lack of strong negative correlation seems to indicate that Qube's impact may be more in terms of increasing media usage overall than adversely affecting the already existing media habits of the audience members" (Becker et al., 1983, p. 135).

The results of Reagan's (1984) study were similar to those of Becker et al. He noted that, in the two cities he considered, Ann Arbor and Grand Rapids, Michigan, the percentage of CNN viewers and subscribers that reported watching local television news was not different than non-subscribers. The results of a subsequent study by Webster (1984) are comparable to those of Hill and Dyer (1981) but conflict with those of Becker et al. (1983) and Reagan (1984). "Consistent with the diversion hypothesis, local news shares were significantly lower among cable subscribers than broadcast viewers"

(Webster 1984, p. 420). Additionally, in the 12 markets studied, local news shares were lowest among pay-cable subscribers and the size of the broadcast/cable differences was greatest in small markets. Webster also notes that despite this diversion, local news appears somewhat less vulnerable to cable than other program types.

Baldwin, Barrett and Bates (1992) expanded on what Webster did and examined the impact of cable on local broadcast news audiences in a sample of 29 markets. Using Nielsen data for the month of November for the years 1981 through 1988, consistent with Webster, Baldwin et al. found that cable appeared to have at least a small negative impact on the audience for early evening local news in small, three-station markets. However, the negative effect of cable in the small three-station markets did not occur for the late evening local newscasts and, in large markets, the negative effect was only present in the late evening. Aside from these two effects, Baldwin et al. concluded that cable did not have a negative effect on local news audiences and that in comparison with the substantial loss of audience experienced by national network news programs, the audience for local television news seemed remarkably loyal and resistant to diversion.

The issue of viewer loyalty, particularly to local news, was the subject of one of the few previous studies of affiliation change. Wakshlag, Agostino, Terry, Driscoll, and Ramsey (1983) used Indianapolis changes in the late 1970s to identify some of the unique effects of the three types of audience loyalty; channel, network and program. They found that most viewers were loyal to local news, continuing to watch the channel they viewed before the switch while watching a different network newscast. They argued that this seemed to indicate that viewers were loyal to a channel rather than to a network.

Such channel loyalty was confirmed in part by Boemer's 1987 study of the relationship between lead-in and local news ratings. While it did not involve an affiliation change, this study found evidence of channel switching in search of network programming as well as a strong correlation between network prime-time program ratings and local late news ratings (Boemer, 1987).

Previous Studies of Network Affiliation Changes

In part because affiliation changes were quite rare prior to 1994, there have only been a few previous studies of the effects of these changes on audience behavior. As noted above, in their study of affiliation changes in Indianapolis, Wakshlag and his colleagues found that local but not network news programs maintained their audiences following the changes. This finding is supported by those of Schofield and Driscoll (1991) who examined the effects of affiliation changes which occurred in Miami in 1989. Schofield and Driscoll noted that structural variables are stable and predicable indicators of audience behavior and, there appears to be viewer loyalty to prime time network entertainment programming but little loyalty to the network newscasts. Further, there is viewer loyalty to local news, especially early local news but there is not necessarily loyalty to other local station programming.

While focusing on how viewing motivations relate to viewing patterns and viewer perceptions rather than on ratings, Abelman, Atkin and Rand (1997) took advantage of the affiliation changes of 1994 to examine viewers' responses to affiliation shifts and the impact of these changes in nine markets. They found that a viewer's awareness of or affinity for a particular program or channel was influenced by the individual's reason for watching television. Although they did not examine the effects of structural factors on program performance, Abelman, Atkin and Rand (1997, p. 363) cited several reasons that viewing behaviors are challenged in the event of affiliation changes. Among the reasons noted were that "channel numbers remain the same but network identity shifts across channels [while] local and syndicated entertainment programming typically remains intact at a given station."

Finally, while not academic studies, McClellan (1995) and Miles (1994 and 1995) described what happened following the wave of affiliation changes that occurred in 1994. McClellan noted "the cost to some of the stations switching to Fox has been a drop in local household ratings" and that "some of the biggest benefactors are stations that didn't switch" (1994, p. 15).

Miles focused on what happened in the first three markets to make affiliation switches--Cleveland, Phoenix and Kansas City. She found that, in those markets, the ratings picture was mixed for local stations but more clear-cut for the networks. Fox's strategy of trading in UHF affiliates for VHF ones yielded strong numbers while NBC and CBS, which moved to less desirable UHF stations, experienced a decline in overall ratings (1994). Miles later noted that in Kansas City, WDAF, which switched from NBC to Fox, suffered a decline in its overall news ratings even though it added three and a half hours of that type of programming (Miles, 1995).

METHOD

The affiliation changes of 1994 provide a unique opportunity to investigate the relationship of those changes to news ratings in general and local news ratings in particular. If local news ratings remained stable in the face of affiliation change, then it can be argued that viewer loyalty to this genre of programming is strong indeed and that local news provides something unique for its users. To assess the degree to which news ratings were related to affiliation change, Nielsen ratings data for February 1994, 1995 and 1996 were assembled for all 34 markets, cited by Zier (1994) and Howard (1995, April), in which an affiliation change occurred. The data were used to test the following hypotheses developed from the literature reviewed above.

H_1: There will be no significant relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for early evening local news programs.

H_2: There will be a significant negative relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for late evening local news programs.

H_3: There will be a significant negative relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for network news programs.

H_4: The will be a significant negative relationship between the number of competing news programs and the changes in ratings for both local and network news programs.

> H_5: There will be no significant relationship between cable penetration and the changes in ratings for either local or network news programs.

Because it was the decision of New World Communications, Inc. to switch the affiliations of its twelve stations from one of the three traditional networks (ABC, CBS, NBC) to Fox that precipitated all the changes that followed and because, in general, the audience for Fox programming is quite different from the audience for news, it is reasonable to expect that a station switching its affiliation from ABC, CBS or NBC to Fox will suffer some erosion in its news ratings. Because of that difference in audience, the expected relationship between a switch to Fox and a change in ratings is likely to hold true for early evening news programs as well as late evening local news programs even though hypothesis one postulates that there is no relationship between affiliation change per se and a change in early evening local news ratings. A sixth hypothesis was developed to test for a relationship between an affiliation change to Fox and a change in ratings.

> H_6: There will be a significant negative relationship between the changes in ratings for both early and late evening local news programs and an affiliation change from ABC, CBS or NBC to Fox.

Four-week average DMA household ratings for all local and network newscasts (Monday-Friday) were assembled from Nielsen Station Indexes from February 1994, February 1995 and February 1996, the "before", "during" and "after" of the affiliation changes. February was selected, because it is one of the four times during the year that Nielsen collects data for all television markets. Further, of the four Nielsen measurement periods, the highest level of national viewership occurs in February. Also, although audience levels fluctuate during the dayparts under consideration, because each daypart was only compared to itself, audience availability was considered to be essentially constant over the time period studied and was therefore, not included as a variable. The unit of analysis was the individual program and each program was coded by type. Early evening local news programs are those which air at either 5 p.m. CT and MT, 6 p.m. ET and PT or 6 p.m. CT and MT, 7 p.m. ET and PT. Late evening local news programs are those which air at 10 p.m. CT and MT, 11 p.m. ET and PT. Network news programs are *ABC World News Tonight, The CBS Evening News* , and *NBC Nightly News.*

To test the hypotheses outlined above, correlational analysis was used to determine whether there is a relationship between affiliation change and changes in local news ratings, network news ratings, number of competing news programs and cable penetration. The changes in ratings were derived by subtracting 1994 ratings from 1995 ratings and by subtracting 1995 ratings from 1996 ratings for each program. Dummy variables were created indicating whether an affiliation change occurred and, if so, when it occurred (in 1995 or 1996) and whether the switch involved a change to or from Fox. These variables were also included in the correlational analysis.

Finally, although researchers such as Barwise (1986) found a program's earlier performance to be a strong indicator of its later performance, because of problems with multicollinearity and auto-correlation, a program's previous performance was not used as a variable in this study. Rather, the focus here is on the change in ratings one year versus another.

Following correlational analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to assess the influence of an affiliation change and a switch to Fox on the changes in household ratings 1995 versus 1994 and 1996 versus 1995 for early and late evening local news programs while a switch from Fox and an affiliation change were examined as factors influencing changes in network news program ratings.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one states that there will be no significant relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for early evening local news programs. The results of correlational analysis do not support this hypothesis. In fact, there is a significant negative relationship between an affiliation change and the change in ratings for both 1995 versus 1994 and 1996 versus 1995. For 1995 versus 1994 the correlation is .-2741, p=.003 and for 1996 versus 1995 the correlation is -.4006, p=.000.

The second hypothesis states there will be a significant negative relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for late evening local news programs. This hypothesis is supported. The correlation between a 1995 affiliation change and the change in ratings, 1995 versus 1994 is -.2764, p=.03 and between a 1996 affiliation change and the change in ratings, 1996 versus 1995, the correlation is -.2693, p=.034.

Hypothesis three, there will be a significant negative relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for network news programs, is not supported. While there is a negative relationship between an affiliation change in 1996 and the change in ratings 1996 versus 1995, it is not significant (r=-.2180, p=.103). In examining the relationship between a 1995 affiliation change and the corresponding changes in ratings, 1995 versus 1994, no correlation coefficient could be computed for network news programs. Analysis of the relationship between a change from Fox and the changes in ratings for both pairs of years for this type of news program yielded similar results; correlation coefficients could not be computed. These computational problems may be due to the small number of cases. There were only eight instances of stations switching affiliations from Fox to ABC, CBS, or NBC.

Hypothesis four, there will be a significant negative relationship between the number of competing news programs and the changes in ratings for both local and network news programs, is derived primarily from Webster's (1985) finding of an inverse relationship between the number of competing program options available and the ability of a program to retain the audience of its lead-in.

To determine if this relationship held true, a variable was created indicating the number of competing news programs being offered at the same time as the program of interest. While there appears to be little support for the hypothesis with respect to early evening local or network news programs, there is some support for the hypothesis when it is applied to late evening local news programs. The correlations for each type of program are detailed in table 1.

Table 1 about here

For late evening local news programs, the relationship between the changes in ratings 1995 v. 1994 and number of competing news programs is a significant negative one but the relationship does not hold true when one examines 1996 v. 1995 ratings.

Hypothesis five states that there will be no significant relationship between cable penetration and the changes in ratings for either local or network news programs. This hypothesis was supported across the board. The correlations between changes in ratings 1995 versus 1994 and 1996 versus 1995 and cable penetration for each of the three types of programs are detailed in table 2.

Table 2 about here

One explanation for the lack of a relationship between cable penetration and changes in ratings for the time period studied is that cable has become a mature industry, penetrations rates have remained fairly stable over the last several years and as a result, cable has little bearing on changes in ratings for either local or network news programs.

Following New World's announcement that it would switch the affiliations of its stations from one of the three traditional networks to Fox, many believed that those switches would have a negative impact on local news ratings. As noted above, because of the differences in audience for Fox versus news programming, it is expected that the negative impact will apply to early as well as late local news ratings. To determine if this were the case, a sixth hypothesis, there will be a significant negative relationship between the changes in ratings for both early and late evening local news programs and an affiliation change from ABC, CBS or NBC to Fox, was tested. The results of correlation analysis support the hypothesis. For early evening local news the relationship between a switch to Fox and changes in ratings is a slight yet significant one, (r=-.1751, p=.060) for 1995 versus 1994 and a moderate and significant one (r=-.4114, p=.000) for 1995 versus 1996. For late local news programs, the relationship is a more striking one. The correlation between a change to Fox and change in ratings 1995 versus 1994 is r=-.4793, p-.000 and between a change to Fox and change in ratings 1996 versus 1995, the correlation is r=-.4906, p=.000. In both instances, the results support the anecdotal evidence provided by McClellan (1995) and Miles (1995) who found that stations who switched to Fox suffered a drop in household ratings.

Following the correlational analysis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was run to assess the influence of an affiliation change and a switch to Fox on the changes in household ratings 1995 versus 1994 and 1996 versus 1995 for early and late evening local news programs. For early evening local news programs, a change to Fox was a more significant source of variance in changes in ratings 1995 versus 1994 and 1996 versus 1995 than was an affiliation change in general although both factors were significant. For late evening local news programs, an affiliation change of any type was a more significant source of variance in changes in ratings 1995 versus 1994 than was a change to Fox while both factors were equally significant sources of variance in changes in ratings 1996 versus 1995. The results of the ANOVA for both program types are detailed in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3 about here

Table 4 about here

As noted above, in assessing the relationship between affiliation change and the changes in ratings for network news programs, a change from Fox was examined as a factor rather than a change to Fox. Although correlation coefficients could not be computed for the relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings 1995 versus 1994 or for the relationship between a switch from Fox and a change in ratings for either pair of years, ANOVA was run on the changes in ratings 1996 versus 1995. Not surprisingly, neither an affiliation change nor a change from Fox was a significant source of variation in the changes in ratings 1996 versus 1995 for network news programs. Both correlational analysis and ANOVA suggest that network news programs may have been less susceptible to affiliation change than was expected.

DISCUSSION

When New World made its announcement regarding the affiliation switches and for months afterward, there was much speculation about the impact of those switches on both the traditional networks and local stations. Fox expected that swapping UHF for VHF affiliates in major markets would result in a windfall of ratings. While there was anecdotal evidence that the strategy was successful in some markets, Cleveland, Phoenix and Kansas City (Miles, 1995), it only applied to Fox network programming. For local news, it appears that the switch to Fox resulted in lower ratings for stations.

For their part, ABC, CBS and NBC scrambled to find stations to replace the affiliates lost to Fox and in some cases found themselves with less desirable UHF stations in markets such as Detroit and Phoenix in addition to Kansas City. While ABC, CBS and NBC may have experienced a decline in overall ratings, apparently the decline did not extend to network news programs. This study found no relationship between affiliation change and change in ratings for this type of programming for either pair of years examined. Further, perhaps because there were so few cases of a switch to ABC, CBS or NBC from Fox, the relationship between that type of affiliation change and change in ratings for network news programs could not be established.

Based on previous research, (Baldwin et al., 1992; Schofield & Driscoll, 1991; Wakshlag et al., 1983; and Webster & Newton, 1988), this study expected to find that the conventional wisdom regarding news viewing would continue to hold in the face of affiliation change. It did not. It was expected that viewers would be loyal to local news, particularly early evening local news, but not to network news. The study found a negative relationship between an affiliation change and a change in ratings for both early and late local news but, no relationship between affiliation change and change in ratings for network news. When a change to Fox was considered, the relationship between that type of affiliation change and a change in ratings for local news programs was quite striking, particularly for 1996 versus 1995. For early evening local news, the correlation between a change to Fox and a change in ratings 1996 versus 1995 is $r=-.4114$, $p=.000$. For late evening local news the correlation between the same two variables is $r=-.4906$, $p=.000$.

One explanation for these somewhat perplexing results is that perhaps most of the changes, particularly the changes to Fox, involved stations which were not market leaders before the change and so had fewer viewers to retain. Further research could be conducted to determine the influence of a station's rank in the market on its ability to retain viewers when it changes affiliation. With respect to late evening news programs, the finding of a negative relationship between an affiliation change to Fox and change in ratings is not all that surprising when one considers that, following the change, those stations which switched to Fox would no longer have a network lead-in to bolster late local news ratings. It is likely that many ABC, CBS or NBC viewers would stay tuned and watch the new affiliates' late local news following prime time rather than turning to another station. This tracks with Boemer's (1987) finding of a strong correlation between network prime-time program ratings and late evening local news ratings. Further research could examine that correlation in light of affiliation change.

With respect to early evening local and network news programs, it appears that viewer preferences for network programming are both stronger than preferences for local news programs and stronger than previously thought. While Webster and Newton (1988) noted that the overall relationship between network and local news seemed to be determined more by the strength of the local news than vice versa, Boemer (1987) found evidence of channel switching in search of network programming and Lin (1992) suggested that there is an association in viewers' news preferences between a particular network and its affiliates. This study's findings coincide with Lin's (1992) suggestion. It appears that viewers looking for a particular network news program will tune to the station with it. If the network news moves from one station to another, viewers will follow it, abandoning the local news on the former affiliate. If it is true that viewers follow network news then, on average, the total number of rating points in a market that go to network news should remain essentially constant when affiliations change. Further research could be conducted to determine if this were the case with the affiliation changes of 1994.

While this study's finding of viewer loyalty to network rather than local news is counter to the findings of previous studies of affiliation change, it may be because those studies only examined what happened when a station switched from one of the three traditional networks to another. Fox was not a factor. But, as noted above, the audience for Fox programming is quite different from the audience for news. When one considers this difference in audience, it is not surprising that there was a negative relationship between a switch to Fox and a change in local news ratings. Because this study only uses data for February 1994, 1995, and 1996 it is impossible to say whether the stations which switched to Fox were subsequently able to recoup some of their early losses. Additional studies might be conducted to ascertain how the stations which switched to Fox in 1994, 1995 and 1996 are doing now. Perhaps the negative relationship between a switch to Fox and a change in ratings was only a temporary one. That research might also explore whether there was a decline in overall viewing of local news following the affiliation changes. For the time being, however, it appears that viewers are less loyal to local news and more loyal to network news programs than was previously believed.

References

Abelman, R., Atkin, D., & Rand, M. (1997). What viewers watch when they watch tv: affiliation change as a case study. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 41 (3), Summer 360-379.

Adams, W.J. & Eastman, S.T. (1997) Prime-time network television programming in Broadcast/Cable Programming Strategies and Tactics, 5th edition, Eastman, S.T. and Ferguson, D.A. eds., 99-139.

Baldwin, T.F., Barrett, M. and Bates B. (1992). Influence of cable on television news audiences. *Journalism Quarterly 69:3*, 651-658.

Barwise, T. P. (1986). Repeat viewing of prime-time series. Journal of Advertising Research, 26, 27-31.

Barwise, T.P. & Ehrenberg, A.S.C. (1988) Television and its audience. London: Sage Publications.

Becker, L. B., Dunwoody, S. Rafaeli, S. (1983). Cable's impact on use of other news media. Journal of Broadcasting 27:2, Spring, 127-140.

Boemer, M. L. (1987). Correlating lead-in show ratings with local television news ratings. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 31(1), 89-94.

Cooper, R. (1996). The status and future of audience duplication research: An assessment of ratings-based theories of audience behavior. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 40, 96-111.

Davis, D. M., & Walker, J. R. (1990). Countering the new media: The resurgence of share maintenance in prime time network television. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 34(4), 487-493.

Ehrenberg, A.S.C., Goodhardt, G.J. & Barwise, T.P. (1990). Double jeopardy revisited. Journal of Marketing, 54, 82-91.

Goodhardt, G. J., Ehrenberg, A. S. C., & Collins, M. A. (1975). The television audience: Patterns of viewing. Westmead, England: Saxon House.

Goodhardt, G. J., Ehrenberg, A. S. C., & Collins, M. A. (1987). The television audience: Patterns of viewing, an update. Aldershot, Hants, England: Gower Publishing Company, Ltd.

Headen, R. S., Klompmaker, J. E., & Rust, R. T. (1979). The duplication of viewing law and television media schedule evaluation. Journal of Marketing Research, 16, 333-340.

Hill, D.B. Dyer, J.A. (1981). Extent of diversion to newscasts from distant stations by cable viewers. Journalism Quarterly 58, 552-555.

Howard, H. H. (1995). The network affiliation chess game. Feedback. , Broadcast Education Association ed. Summer, 22-25.

Howard. H. H. (1995 April). The 1994 "network affiliation chess game" A chronology and analysis. unpublished manuscript. Author.

Lin, C.A. (1992). Audience Selectivity of local television newscasts. Journalism Quarterly 69:2 Summer, 379-382.

Litman, B.R. Kohl, L.S. (1992). Network rerun viewing in the age of new program services. Journalism Quarterly, 69(2), Summer, 383-391.

McClellan, S. (1995, April 24). The mixed bag of affiliation switches. Broadcasting and Cable 125:17, 15.

McClellan, S. (1996, October 7). Three on top of the news. Broadcasting and Cable, 44, 46, 48.

McPhee, W.N. (1963). Formal Theories of Mass Behavior. London: Collier-MacMillan, Ltd.

McQuail, D. (1997). Audience Analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Miles, L. (1994, September 26). Networks change addresses. Mediaweek, 14-16.

Miles, L. (1995, January 2). Making book. Mediaweek, 3.

Reagan, J. (1984). Effects of cable television news use. Journalism Quarterly 61, Summer, 317-324.

Rust, R.T., Kamakura, W.A. & Alpert, M.I. (1992). Viewer preference segmentation and viewing choice models for network television. Journal of Advertising XXX(1), March, 1-18.

Schofield, L. & Driscoll, P.D. (1991). Effects of television network affiliation changes: A Miami case study. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 35:3, Summer, 367-374.

Wakshlag, J.J., Agostino, D.E., Terry, H.A., Driscoll, P. and Ramsey, B. (1983). Television news viewing and network affiliation changes. Journal of Broadcasting 27:1, 53-68.

Walker, J. R. (1988). Inheritance effects in the new media environment. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 32(4), 391-404.

Webster, J.G. (1984). Cable's impact on audiences for local news. Journalism Quarterly 61, Fall, 419-422.

Webster, J. G. (1985). Program audience duplication: A study of television inheritance effects. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 29(2), 121-133.

Webster, J.G. & Lichty, L.W. (1991). Ratings Analysis Theory and Practice. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Webster, J. G. and Newton, G.D. (1988). Structural determinants of the television news audience. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media 32:4*, 381-389.

Webster, J.G. & Phalen, P.F. (1997). The Mass Audience: Rediscovering the dominant model. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Webster, J.G. & Wakshlag, J.J. (1983). A theory of program choice. Communication Research 10 (4), 430-446.

Webster, J.G. & Wang, (1992). Structural determinants of the television news audience. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 32(4), 381-389.

Wulfmeyer, T. (1983). The interest and preferences of audiences for local television news. Journalism Quarterly 60, Summer, 323-328.

Zier, J.A. (1994, December 4) Fog of war engulfs affiliation battles. *Broadcasting and Cable*. 50, 52-56.

Table 1

Partial Correlations (Controlling for Market Rank)
For Changes in Ratings 1994 vs. 1995 and 1995 vs. 1996 and
Number of Competing News Programs

	1994 v. 1995	1995 v. 1996
Early Evening Local News Programs	r=-.0920 p=.326	r=.9529 p=.573
Late Evening Local News Programs	r=-.2306 p=.071	r=.-.1410 p=.274
Network News Programs	.0786 p=.561	r=-.0744 p=.582

Table 2

Partial Correlations (Controlling for Market Rank) For Changes in Ratings 1994 vs. 1995 and 1995 vs. 1996 and Cable Penetration

	1994 v. 1995	1995 v. 1996
Early Evening Local News Programs	r=-.0499 p=.595	r=.1062 p=.256
Late Evening Local News Programs	r=.1778 p=.167	r=.0479 p=.712
Network News Programs	r=.0059 p=.965	r=.1600 p=.234

Table 3
ANOVA
For Changes in Ratings 1994 vs. 1995 and 1995 vs. 1996 for Early Evening Local News Programs by Affiliation Change and Change to Fox

Changes in Ratings 1995 versus 1994

Sources of Variation	DF	F	Sign. of F
Main Effects	2	10.006	.000
1995 Affiliation Change	1	13.458	.000
Change to Fox	1	4.778	.033
Explained	3	6.685	.000
Residual	114		

Changes in Ratings 1996 versus 1995

Sources of Variation	DF	F	Sign. of F
Main Effects	2	17.930	.000
1996 Affiliation Change	1	10.460	.002
Change to Fox	1	9.873	.002
Explained	3	12.085	.000
Residual	121		

Table 4
ANOVA
For Changes in Ratings 1994 vs. 1995 and 1995 vs. 1996 for Late Evening Local News Programs by Affiliation Change and Change to Fox

Changes in Ratings 1995 versus 1994

Sources of Variation	DF	F	Sign. of F
Main Effects	2	7.236	.003
1995 Affiliation Change	1	2.967	.090
Change to Fox	1	13.480	.000
Explained	3	5.521	.002
Residual	65		

Changes in Ratings 1996 versus 1995

Sources of Variation	DF	F	Sign. of F
Main Effects	2	17.887	.000
1996 Affiliation Change	1	10.079	.002
Change to Fox	1	17.005	.000
Explained	3	12.023	.000
Residual	68		

Running head: HELPLESSNESS IN LOCAL NEWS

Learned Helplessness
in Local Television News:
A 12 Year Update

Grace Ferrari Levine
Quinnipiac College

Mailing Address: Department of Mass Communications
Quinnipiac College
Hamden, CT 06518

E-Mail: glevine@quinnipiac.edu

Telephone: (203) 288-5251 Extension 8211

Presented at the 81st Annual Convention of the Association
for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
Baltimore, August 5, 1998

ABSTRACT

Local newscasts of three major market, network owned and operated stations in New York City were found to focus on themes of helplessness in 68.3% of the time devoted to news. Helplessness was most often experienced by the general public. It's causes were more likely to be attributed to environmental factors, and described as generalizing across time frames and situations. After a 12 year period, the nature of helplessness in New York local newscasts remained virtually the same.

Learned Helplessness in Local Television News:

A 12 Year Update

Introduction

In recent years criticism of television news has become far more negative and widespread. The press, particularly the electronic press, has come to be regarded as a purveyor of hopelessness and disillusionment. A recurring theme in much of what has been said by social scientists (e.g. Patterson, 1993), media critics (e.g., Glaberson, 1994; Starobin, 1995; Auletta, in Alfred I. du Pont Forum, 1994; Frankel, 1995, 1996 and 1998; Stienle, 1996; and Winerip, 1998) and media practitioners (e.g., Safer, in Brown, 1992; Lack, in Alfred I. du Pont Forum, 1994; Rather, in Viles, 1993; Cronkite, 1995, and in Lafayette, 1997; and Koppel, 1997) is that traditional journalistic values have declined significantly.

Political scientist Thomas Patterson (1995), in his extensive study of television campaign coverage, stresses the growing power of the media and explains that the "press magnifies certain aspects of politics and downplays others, which are often more central to the issues of governing" (p. 29). Patterson faults the press for its inclination to favor stories which emphasize negativism and lack context. He maintains that "the press's restless search for the riveting story works against its intention to provide the voters with a reliable picture of the campaign" (p. 29).

William Glaberson, media critic for the New York Times (1994), suggests that by "casting doubt on everyone, a cynical brand of journalism may be undermining its own credibility". Glaberson quotes the editor of The Des Moines Register as stating that journalists are "so good at reporting all the negatives and all the infighting that we give people a sense it is all hopeless" (p.4).

In a Columbia Journalism Review article, media critic Paul Starobin (1995) explains that the "current disdain running through today's journalism is rooted in a deep and abiding cynicism" (p. 25). Starobin maintains that "even though...understandable, a migration from skepticism to cynicism has not served the course of journalism well. Cynicism can be a lazy substitute for curiosity, and in the most corrosive form, it can produce journalists who have a diminished view of their profession and of themselves. Worse, it can damage readers and viewers and thus, democracy" (p. 31).

Ken Auletta, author and critic for The New Yorker, commenting on declining standards in television news, states that "the tribal culture of journalism has shifted not just in local television--though that's probably in my judgment the most egregious example of it--but it's shifted, and there's now a premium placed on this kind of mindless pursuit of something to say in the political realm that's sharp, something about crime that's exciting, different, gives you a sense of action. And I think that's scary" (in Alfred I. du Pont Forum, 1994, p. 62).

Max Frankel, who has written a series of critiques on local television news in the New York Times Magazine writes in 1995 of the "mighty doses of virulent violence and the absence of instructive information" in local TV news. "Even as crime rates subside, the wicked nightly assault on our senses gets louder. . . I have learned from my own recent viewing in New York that when local events fail to supply this "news" machine with enough depravity, it quickly imports more by satellite or syndicate" (p. 46). In a 1996 piece Frankel suggests that economic considerations lead news operations to favor coverage of murders, fires and accidents since this can be accomplished more quickly than reports which analyze local problems. "It's not that local newsrooms have a built-in predilection for violence" Frankel explains, "It's just that it's there--easy to get--and it can be enhanced by production techniques" (p. 23). In a 1998 commentary Frankel, in exasperation asks: "How about shaming station owners into filtering out the gratuitous slime of local newscasts and reporting what really is news" (p. 22)?

Focusing specifically on an examination of South Florida's notorious local news operation at WSVN-TV, Paul Steinle (1996) describes a newscast "pregnant with post-production values and void of substance... [where] technique and style predominate and news becomes a carnival sideshow. This is television more interested in pandering to the public than serving the public's interests" (p. 47).

Michael Winerip, (1998), in a New York Times Magazine report, asks "Does Local TV News Have to Be So Bad"? Winerip argues that local newscasts focus primarily on crime, violence, catastrophe and fluff: "Most anyone in the press and academia who has given it much thought has concluded that while there are exceptions, local television news is atrocious. Crime has been going down for years: the Justice Department reports that the rate at which Americans were victimized by crime in 1966 fell to the lowest level since data were first collected in 1973... Yet crime and violence continue to be the mainstay of local TV news" (p. 33).

Perhaps most significant in recent years is the growing number of prominent broadcast journalists who have spoken out about declining standards in broadcast journalism. Morley Safer, a prominent media practitioner, was critical of commercial broadcast news at a day long seminar on the press at Columbia University. Safer maintains that one problem with network news today is the emphasis on such "gimmicks" as new sets and new hairstyles. He also criticizes what he describes as the "meaningless" recurring feature stories that are now seen on each of the three network evening newscasts" which he finds at times to be "indistinguishable from such syndicated tabloid fare as Hard Copy" (in Brown, 1992).

Andrew Lack, award winning CBS news producer and current president of NBC news, speaking at the Alfred I. duPont Forum in 1994 cautions fellow journalists that "we too often choose, without a moment's hesitation, the story that makes you feel, usually repulsion, over the story that makes you think, which in television terms usually means boring" (p. 33). Although Lack holds that not all news programming is sensationalized he maintains that "enough self-respecting journalists recognize its insidious pervasiveness. Social mayhem has never been more marketable. Television news as a business seems wildly willing to sell it, way beyond what I thought any of us might have expected, even seeing this trend grow as it has over the last few years. Incest, child abuse, serial murder, sex crimes of all descriptions are investigated, quote-unquote ad nauseam" (p. 32).

In 1993 Dan Rather, CBS news anchor, addressed members of the Radio-Television News Director's Association. The theme of his presentation, reminiscent of a talk given to the same group by Edward R. Murrow in 1958, is that the promise of television news is being squandered and cheapened. He accuses broadcast news operations of putting ratings before journalistic values. To his fellow journalists Rather said, "we all should be ashamed of what we have and have not done, measured against what we could do. . .Our reputations have been reduced, our credibility cracked, justifiably. They've got us putting more and more fuzz and wuzz on the air, cop-shop stuff, so as to compete not with other news programs but with entertainment programs, including those posing as news programs, for dead bodies, mayhem and lurid tales". (Viles, 1993, p. 12).

In "The Cronkite Report", a documentary produced and hosted by retired CBS anchor Walter Cronkite, the effect of growing time and money constraints on the television news process are discussed along with the need to compete with a growing number of tabloid news shows. The tendency to stress the sensational at the expense of reporting more complicated stories is emphasized by Cronkite and other well know journalists. Today's broadcast journalists are described as "more competitive, more cutthroat, more entertainment focused", and more inclined to favor "tabloidization, trivialization and celebrity over substance." Cronkite singles out local television news, in particular, for underestimating the intelligence of the American public (March 22, 1995). At the Radio-Television News Director's Conference in 1997, Cronkite attributes the decline in quality and credibility in broadcast journalism to the fact that: "big corporate owners, infected with the greed that marks the end of the 20th century, stretch constantly for ever-increasing profit, condemning quality to take the hindmost. . . If they understood the nature of this public service and treated their investment in it accordingly, we would be saved from compromising journalistic integrity in the mad scramble for ratings and circulation" (in Lafayette, 1997, p. 35).

As recipient of the Burton Benjamin award given by the Committee to Protect Journalists' International Press Freedom, Ted Koppel spoke of dangers to American journalism: the integration of media conglomerates and "fading lines between television news and entertainment". Referring to journalists throughout the world who function in dangerous circumstances Koppel said: "We celebrate their courage even as we exhibit increasingly little of our own. It is not death, or torture or imprisonment that threatens us as American journalists, it is the trivialization of our industry. . . We believe it to be sufficient excuse that "we are giving the public what it wants. We have the responsibility to do more" (Koppel, 1997, p. 23).

While negative criticism of television news has intensified, the activities of various media watchdog groups have also become more prominent. Among those groups which have examined local television newscasts across the country are: the Denver based Rocky Mountain Media Watch (RMMW), and the Consortium for Local Television Surveys (COLTS) established at the University of Miami with the help of seven other universities in different parts of the country.

The RMMW, working with volunteers who tape newscasts on designated nights in markets across the country, conducted its initial surveys in 1995. Based on a survey of the half-hour 11 o'clock broadcasts of 100 stations in 58 cities, RMMW reports that 40% of the time was devoted to coverage of crime and disaster. Crime was the lead story in 37% of the broadcasts, disaster in 15% (Frankel, 1995). In 1997 RMMW announced the results of third annual study which were similar to those they reported in 1996. Based on the broadcasts aired by 100 stations in 55 markets, 43% of the time was devoted to reporting violent topics while news of education, the environment and other social issues was almost non-existent. Crime and disaster segments, were the lead stories in 72% of the broadcasts and 33% of the news was rated as trivial, including anchor chat, soft news and celebrity stories (RMMW, 1997).

The COLTS compared proportions of crime and other news categories (government, disaster, arts, health, education and race relations) in 80 randomly selected early evening, local newscasts in eight major cities over a four month period. Reportedly, "stories about crime [were] emphasized over other story categories by a margin of two to one" (School of Communication, University of Miami, 1997, p. 1).[1]

From various critical perspectives local television news has been found wanting. What has been described as "creeping tabloidization" is seen by many as troubling given the medium's major news function and its power to convey, not only information, but experience. If viewers actually "experience" the news and if emotionally laden images of crime and disaster dominate newscasts, it follows that exposure to such images may create, in viewers, the sense that the environment is unpredictable and beyond control. This whole line of reasoning has added significance when one considers the work of Martin Seligman (1975) and his associates on "learned helplessness," a process whereby experience with lack of control or response-outcome independence leads to various behavioral problems. Seligman reports:

> Helplessness is a disaster for organisms capable of learning that they are helpless. Three types of disruption are caused by uncontrollability in the laboratory: the motivation to respond is sapped, the ability to perceive success is undermined, and emotionality is heightened. These effects hold across a wide variety of circumstances and species, and are prominent in Homo sapiens. (p. 14)

Over the course of the last two decades a wide array of studies has provided empirical support for the learned helplessness model. Additionally the precision of the model has been increased through the specification of the conditions under which helplessness effects can be expected to generalize across different types of activity and experience. (Abramson et.al., 1978).

According to the reformulated helplessness model the way an individual comes to understand experiences with uncontrollability determines the generality, persistence and extent of helplessness effects since people tend to attribute the cause of their failure to control outcomes along three dimensions: 1) generality, 2) chronicity and 3) locus. The locus dimension refers to the degree to which the cause stems from the person (internal) or from environmental factors (external). Internal attributions (e.g., "I lack intelligence" rather than "The test is unfair") are thought to be more productive of deficits. Attributions to factors which are more stable should produce more chronic deficits, and attributions to global rather than specific factors will cause helplessness effects to generalize further. Of particular relevance to the present line of inquiry is research which indicates that helplessness need not be experienced directly, but can be learned from observing others experience lack of control as well (DeVellis, DeVellis & McCauley, 1978; Brown & Inouye, 1978; and Breen, Vulcano & Dyck, 1978).

Given this evidence and given that television news is a major source of "vicarious" experience, analyses of helplessness in news content were conducted. Using the Seligman model as a basis for defining different degrees of helplessness and control which might be depicted in a news segment, Levine analyzed network newscasts and reported that helplessness was displayed in more than 70% of the time during which news segments were programmed (Levine, 1977). Analysis of NBC's "Segment Three," a series of in-depth news reports by Levy and Rickard uncovered similar findings (Levy & Richard, 1982).

In 1986 Levine reported the results of a content analytic study of 30 hours of major market local television news and its message in regard to personal control. Helplessness was found to be a point of focus in 71.4% of the time during which news segments were programmed. Members of the general public were far more likely to be associated with helplessness than prominent and professional people. Helplessness was most often reported to be the result of environmental factors and more likely to be attributed to causes which generalize across different locations and time frames (Levine, 1986).

The research proposed here attempts to examine a similar amount of New York local news programming in order to determine what, if any, changes have occurred after a 12 year period. In summary the purpose of this study is 1) to reassess the extent of helplessness in local television news, 2) to determine once again whether certain types of attributions are more likely to be associated with helplessness, 3) to reexamine whether certain types of people are more likely to be presented as helpless and 4) to compare the results of the present study with those reported in 1986.

Procedure

The half-hour broadcasts immediately preceding the national newscasts of each New York City station's parent network were chosen for the present analysis, since it is during this time period that audiences are the largest and stations compete head to head for audience share. Twenty weekdays were randomly drawn from 55 in an 11 week period in order to determine which broadcasts would be taped for analysis. Additional newscasts were recorded for training purposes. In all, 31 hours of WABC, WCBS, and WNBC's daily newscasts were recorded.

The basic unit of analysis was the news segment, defined as any news item dealing with one event or theme or a series of related events with a central unifying theme. Since straight news reports of issues and events were of primary interest in the study, commercial messages, promotional material, commentary, sports and weather were not included in the analysis. Also excluded were trivial items, unrelated to news of issues and events, e.g., stories having to do with a disturbed polar bear that reportedly needed a "shrink", a guerrilla having a birthday at the Bronx Zoo, a pizza throwing contest or children selling lemonade, were excluded.[2] Finally, segments which could not be coded because they were so short in duration, garbled and insufficient in clarity as to obscure central themes were excluded.[3]

The following definitions, which had been reliably used in previous studies of helplessness in television news (Levine, 1977, 1986), provided the basis for rating each news segment in terms of the degree of helplessness or control which was a point of focus:[4]

> Extreme helplessness. An item in which a central figure is presented in such a way as to suggest a complete inability to have affected the outcome, good or bad, which accrued to him; total response-outcome independence. If there is no central figure then any item in which human response would have been summarily ineffective, or if a response has already been made it is clear that it will be ineffective, (e.g., catastrophe items such as air disasters or stories of abused infants).
>
> Strong helplessness. An item in which a central figure is shown to have an absolute minimum degree of control over his outcomes; or a situation in which only extremely unlikely or difficult human responses could be expected to alter the outcome in any way; or an event in which response has been made but is highly unlikely to succeed, (e.g., stories of elderly mugging victims).
>
> Moderate helplessness. An item in which the central figure is presented in a way which suggests moderate control over outcomes; or situations in which human responses are available which can affect the outcome but the central figure's capacity or experience with performing the response is limited; or an event in which a response is reported as having been made but is not likely to succeed, (e.g., fatalities due to bystander ignorance of first aid procedures).
>
> Mild helplessness. An item in which a central figure is presented as having had a good chance of affecting outcomes but for some reason is unable to do so; or situations in which there are readily available responses which could have been used to affect outcomes but were for some reason not made; or events which are presented in which responses have been made and are equally likely to fail or succeed, (e.g., reports of police killed in the line of duty).
>
> Control. Items where central figures are represented as having caused desired outcomes by virtue of their volitional behavior, (e.g., reported victories or accomplishments resulting from skilled performance).
>
> Irrelevant. Items having no bearing on response-outcome dependence or independence.

Since the reformulated helplessness model suggests that the way an individual explains the causes of uncontrollability affects the magnitude of helplessness deficits, it was important to assess the way helplessness was attributed in news segments. Therefore, in addition to rating news segments along the helplessness dimension, each segment in which helplessness or control was displayed was examined to determine the principal cause associated with what was reported, i.e., the attribution, either directly made or suggested, for the reported outcome. The following definitions, based largely on the reformulated helplessness model and refined by coders during training sessions, provided the basis for coding attributions in news segments where control or helplessness was displayed along three dimensions: generality, chronicity and locus.

Generality:

Global attribution. Any suggestion or outright statement indicating that a person's ability or inability to affect outcomes in a given situation is not situation specific but rather is likely to generalize across a variety of like and dissimilar settings, (e.g., social problems presented as symptomatic of the entire social system). .

Specific attribution. Any report or suggestion that the cause of a given event is situation specific or individual specific, i.e., it is not likely to generalize across situations or across people. Attributions are to be coded as specific unless there is reference to the likelihood that the control or helplessness depicted extends beyond the limits of the particular news item being reported, (e.g. economic problems attributed to a given policy or conditions particular to a certain location).

Chronicity:

Stable attribution. Any suggestion that control or lack of it is likely to remain constant over time in that the factors which have brought it about will do so again in the future. Reported causes will be considered stable unless there is direct reference to their unstable character, (e.g., crimes presented as a function of rampant disorder).

Unstable attribution. Any indication that factors which precipitated lack of control over outcomes are time specific or otherwise variable and likely not to occur repeatedly, (e.g., accidents atttibuted to lack of experience or to carelessness).

Locus:

Internal attribution: Any suggestion that an outcome has occurred due to the nature of a particular person and/or the physical or mental condition under which s/he is operating.

Any suggestion that the actor selected freely from a number of behavioral alternatives to perform the reported behavior. If it is reported that the central figure and not relevant others can or cannot affect outcomes the items will be coded internal, (e.g., injuries resulting from the pathological behavior of assailants).

External attribution. Any suggestion that the cause of an event or the central figure's reported behavior was more or less principally determined by environmental forces acting upon the individual; the suggestion that limited options were available to the actor; the suggestion that people were operating according to the constraints of a role rather than as a function of personal choice. When environmental forces are such that neither the individual or individuals involved or relevant others or for that matter any other person, would be likely to affect the outcome in question, (e.g., the suggestion that impovished conditions or perceived danger percipitated an outcome).

Finally, based on the person or persons who were the focus of attention, each segment was rated as falling within one of the following central figure categories:

Prominent people or organizations. Those individuals or institutions which are well known and are in the public eye: particularly politicians, celebrities or collections of same.

Professionals. Those who enjoy a certain degree of prominence because they function in a designated role or are members of a profession: teachers, journalists, lawyers, physicians, businessmen, or a corporation or the criminal justice system.

General public. Those who are presented as ordinary people: citizens, residents, commuters, workers or groups representing the general public.

All segments were classified on the basis of what was said as well as on the basis of non-verbal cues and visual displays. What was said by those who were the focus of attention in the segment as well as in voice-overs and commentary by reporters and/or anchor people was taken into account. Visual components such as the camera techniques used for highlighting and emphasis, were also considered in coding all news material.

Two coders, representing different academic backgrounds, both of whom had been involved in earlier studies of helplessness in television news, engaged in training in the application of ratings categories, definitions and scales. In the present study coders reached an intercoder reliability level of .93 in rating two half-hour broadcasts recorded for training purposes.[5]

All news segments were timed in order to determine the proportion of news time allotted to news in each of the six rating categories. The chi-square procedure, commonly used in assessing contingency problems involving cross-classified nominal scale variables was used as a basis for assessing the statistical significance of relationships between: (1) helplessness ratings and attributional data and (2) helplessness ratings and central figure data.

Results

The analysis of WABC, WCBS and WNBC broadcasts revealed that substantial time was devoted to the presentation of human helplessness. Averaging across the three stations, 68.3% of the time given to news in the 60 broadcasts was devoted to emphasizing some degree of helplessness. In contrast was the fact that control was a point of focus in only 10.3% of the news time. Examining the stations individually, WNBC devoted the least amount of time (65%) to suggesting helplessness. In comparison, WABC newscasts displayed helplessness during 69% of the time and WCBS 70%. From Table 1 it is clear that, for the three stations combined, the greatest proportion of time was devoted to news which fell into the extreme helplessness category.[6]

Table 1

Proportion of News Time in Each Rating Category

Rating Category	Station	%	%--All 3 Stations
Extreme Helplessness	ABC	27	
	CBS	33	28.3
	NBC	25	
Strong Helplessness	ABC	13	
	CBS	7	9
	NBC	6	
Moderate Helplessness	ABC	11	
	CBS	10	11
	NBC	12	
Mild Helplessness	ABC	18	
	CBS	20	20
	NBC	22	
Irrelevant	ABC	22	
	CBS	17	22
	NBC	26	
Control	ABC	9	
	CBS	12	10.3
	NBC	10	

Attributional dimensions

Helplessness--generality. The frequency distribution for generality and helplessness indicated a significant dependent relationship between the two factors [X^2 (4, N = 418) = 19.34, p < .001]. Although most (375 of 418 or 90%) outcomes which were the focus of attention in news segments were attributed to specific causes, it was clear that the proportion of segments attributed globally increased progressively as the level of helplessness increased. As can be seen in Table 2, 2% (1 of 61) of control items were globally attributed, whereas 16% (25 of 159) of extreme helplessness items were globally attributed.

Table 2

Helplessness and Generality

Rating Category	Global Attribution	Specific Attribution	Total
Control	1	60	61
Mild Helplessness	3	105	108
Moderate Helplessness	7	38	45
Strong Helplessness	7	38	45
Extreme Helplessness	25	134	159
TOTAL	43	375	418

$X^2 = 19.340$, d.f. = 4, $p < .001$

Helplessness--chronicity. The frequency distribution for chronicity and helplessness indicated a significant relationship between the variables in question [X^2 (4, N = 418) = 24.165, $p < .001$]. As levels of helplessness increased so did the likelihood that uncontrollability would be associated with stable causes. From Table 3 it is evident that, although most news reports were attributed to stable causes, the greatest proportion (96%) of stable attributions were made in news segments which emphasized extreme helplessness.

Table 3

Helplessness and Chronicity

Rating Category	Stable Attribution	Unstable Attribution	Total
Control	55	6	61
Mild Helplessness	98	10	108
Moderate Helplessness	34	11	45
Strong Helplessness	35	10	45
Extreme Helplessness	153	6	159
TOTAL	375	43	418

$X^2 = 24.165$, d.f. = 4, $p < .001$

Helplessness--locus. A cross comparison of frequencies in the locus and helplessness categories revealed a clear pattern of results [X^2 (4, N = 418= 261.66, p < .001]. As evident in Table 4 the proportion of segments attributed to internal factors, that is the ability of the central figure to affect outcomes, decreased as the degree of helplessness increased. All segments in which central figures reportedly had control over outcomes were attributed internally, that is to a particular skill or ability possessed by the central figure. Helplessness, on the other hand, was most often attributed externally, i.e., to the central figure's lack of ability or skill combined with the suggestion that relevant others would be similarly unable to affect the outcome in question. Of further interest was the fact that 96.9% of the items in which extreme helplessness was emphasized were attributed externally.

Table 4

Helplessness and Locus

Rating Category	Internal Attribution	External Attribution	Total
Control	61	0	61
Mild Helplessness	13	95	108
Moderate Helplessness	7	38	45
Strong Helplessness	5	40	45
Extreme Helplessness	5	154	159
Total	91	327	418

$X^2 = 261.66$, d.f. = 4, $p < .001$

Helplessness--central figures. The relationship between the different central figure categories and levels of helplessness was also significant [X^2 (4, N = 418= 151.017, $p < .001$]. The 2 x 5 contingency table crossing levels of helplessness with central figure categories (prominent and professional people as opposed to members of the general public) indicated a significant relationship between the two variables. From Table 5 it is clear that as the degree of helplessness increased, the proportion of segments focusing on the general public also increased. Conversely, for prominent and professional people, the proportion of segments in which they were a point of focus decreased as helplessness levels increased.

Table 5

Helplessness & Central Figures

Rating Category	Prominent & Professional Figures	General Public	Total
Control	48	13	61
Mild Helplessness	53	55	108
Moderate Helplessness	14	31	45
Strong Helplessness	6	39	45
Extreme Helplessness	4	155	159
Total	125	393	418

$X^2 = 151.017$, d.f. = 4, $p < .001$

In summary, in the 60 randomly selected broadcasts, the three stations presented helplessness in 68.3% of the time during which news segments were programmed. Helplessness was often attributed to global, stable and external causes. Members of the general public differed from prominent and professional people in that they were more often associated with helplessness.

Comparison: 1986 Publication--Present Study

There are certain similarities and differences which emerge when the data in the present analysis are compared to those reported in the 1986 study. The prercentage of news time devoted to helplessness themes is marginally different. As evident in Table 6, in the present study 68.3% of news time is devoted to some degree of helplessness, whereas in the 1986 study the proportion was 71.4%. This variation stems in part from the fact that news material in which control is a point of focus is presented in only 10.3% of the time in the recent newscasts in contrast to 12.4% in the 1986 study. Another contributing factor is the 5.7% increase in the proportion of time given, in recent broadcasts, to themes which are not related to helplessness or control. What remains virtually the same in both the earlier and present studies is the proportion of time devoted to extreme helplessness. It is this rating category which continues to represent the largest proportion of time devoted to news.

Table 6

Proportion of News Time in Each Rating Category

Present Analysis--1986 Study

Rating Category	%--Present Study	%--1986 Study
Extreme Helplessness	28.3	28.4
Strong Helplessness	9	17.6
Moderate Helplessness	11	13.3
Mild Helplessness	20	12.1
Irrelevant	22	16.3
Control	10.3	12.4

The attributions most often associated with helplessness and control in the present study mirror those reported in 1986. Helplessness is again significantly more likely to be attributed to global, stable or external causes. Also similar in both analyses is the fact that lack of control is significantly more often associated with members of the general public than with prominent and professional people.

Discussion

In the 90's major market television newscasts continue to give substantial amounts of time to reporting helplessness, most of it as extreme levels. Even in the face of more negative and widespread criticism, the helplessness picture has remained virtually the same. While at first the marginally smaller proportion of time devoted to helplessness might be seen as a change for the better, closer examination suggests otherwise. This is due to the fact that the change results in part from a decline in the proportion of time devoted to presenting reports which emphasize control. Also there is, in the recent newscasts, an increase in attention to themes which have no relationship to helplessness or control such as reports of a continuing search for a cat lost in an airplane cargo hold or a story about a young teen's quest to secure President Clinton's autograph are examples. Unfortunately, an increase in this type of news material, perhaps best described as "trivial", is likely to do little to offset the message of hopelessness and helplessness which continues to dominate local newscasts. With minor changes, after a 12 year period, helplessness continues to dominate New York local news, in sharp contrast to news which focuses on controllability.

Members of the general public emerge once again as most often helpless and least often in control. Also their experiences with uncontrollability are most often associated with the most far reaching causes. In 1986 this researcher reported: "A dominant and repeated theme is that there is considerable unpredictability, chaos and uncontrollability. It is neither limited to a specific domain nor to a particular time frame and the general public cannot be expected to exert meaningful control" (Levine, 1986, p. 18). The data collected in the present study lead unfortunately to a similar conclusion. Levels of helplessness modeled in television newscasts continue to be excessive. The emergent message is that crime, crisis, catastrophe and disorder are rampant. The environment is unpredictable and the general public cannot exert control. Further reinforcing this view is the fact that news segments tend to be short in duration and lacking in context, thus making events seem more puzzling, occurrences more random and by extension more uncontrollable.[7]

What accounts for this disproportionate display of human helplessness and pattern of related findings? A rather cynical, but not necessarily inaccurate view might be termed the institutional priorities explanation. In capsulized form this position holds that news operations, as commercial enterprises, are in the business of selling time. Given this, news shows are precisely that, shows, entertainment vehicles where, in an increasingly competitive realm, the goal of attracting viewers is of considerably greater salience than the goal of informing and educating. The inclusion of material in television newscasts which can perhaps best be described as fluff or light filler, flashy graphics and music, combined with frequent reminders of upcoming news segments and promotion of later newscasts lends credence to this view.

In addition to trivial news, items which focus on chaos and disorder may well be designed to attract viewers. The judgment may simply have been made by corporate executives, that the depiction of human misery and the tragic components of the human condition offer the potential advertiser an audience mesmerized by the drama of such presentations. It is, in fact, quite likely that such a strategy if deliberately developed would be effective. Danger, after all, has demonstrable dramatic impact. Appeals to sympathy and stimulation of fear are not unknown in theatrical circles. It is also the case that drama can be introduced in newscasts, not only through story selection, but also via the dramatic construction of reality which results from the way stories are rendered in the inherently powerful language of television. The behaviors of news anchors may also be directed at producing dramatic impact and helplessness imagery as well, whether through a vaguely frantic reporting pace or via a cynical, sardonic and ironical style which reinforces the sense impending of doom and, or the futility of it all.

A related explanation of the frequency with which helplessness themes dominate the local newscasts studied also focuses on the broadcaster's felt need for dramatic news presentations but suggests that stories featuring people's lack of control per se are not deliberately sought after. To be maximally dramatic, television must rely upon stimulating visual material. Indeed, the alleged disadvantages of the dreaded "talking head" are commonly acknowledged in the industry. It seems reasonable that helplessness may be a characteristic highly correlated with film and tape footage which is visually active. Fires, floods, and the obviously distraught victims of some catastrophe are more likely to stand out as figure against a bland background and only incidentally model human helplessness at the same time.

Visually exciting material could be stripped of its helplessness implications were it not for the intensity of the need for drama. Talking heads could, in many cases, reduce the level of helplessness in even the most inherently dramatic story by providing background information designed to promote an understanding of the causes of events. Clearly, the knowledge of an event's causal antecedents can promote an enhanced sense of control, but, as Erik Barnouw pithily suggests, television is interested in effects not causes, since causes cannot easily be photographed (Barnouw, 1983).

Ultimately, of course, it is of little consequence what the intent of news executives may or may not be. If the depiction of helplessness, as may be suspected, influences either the behavior and, or the world view of the consumer of television news there is cause for concern. A society in which people view themselves as unable to affect serious social issues is a society whose democratic character is threatened.

Footnotes

[1] Excluded from the COLTS analyses were weather, sports and commercial content.

[2] Of the 628 news segments analyzed, 31 or 5% were excluded as "non news" items.

[3] Of the 628 news segments in the present analysis, 19 or 3% were excluded for lack of clarity.

[4] For a more extended detailing of rating categories and definitions, see Levine, 1986.

[5] Reliability levels were assessed according to a procedure reported by Scott (1955) computed as an average of the number of judgements made in which coders agree divided by the total number of judgements made, while correcting for the probability of agreement expected by chance.

[6] On average, the amount of time devoted to news in a half-hour broadcast was 13 minutes, with the deletion of weather, sports reports and commercial messages.

[7] The average length of news segments in the broadcasts analyzed was 1 minute and 24 seconds.

References

Abramson, L.Y., Seligman, M.E.P., & Teasdale, J.D. (1978). Learned helplessness in humans: Critique and reformulation. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 87, 49-74.

Alfred I. duPont Forum. (January 27, 1994). Declining standards in news: Is it all television's fault? New York: Columbia University Publications.

Altheide, D.L. (1976). Creating reality. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Barnouw, E. (February 27, 1983). Conference presentation, New School for Social Research, NYC.

Breen, L.J., Vulcano, B., & Dyck, D. (1979). Observational learning and sex roles in learned helplessness. Psychological Reports, 44, 135-144.

Brown, I.B., & Inouye, D.K. (1978). Learned helplessness through modeling: The role of perceived similarity in competence. JPSP, 36, 900-908.

Brown, R. (February 3, 1992). CBS's Safer blasts network news. Broadcasting & Cable, 14.

Cronkite report. (March 22, 1995). Television documentary, The Discovery Channel.

DeVellis, R.F., DeVellis, B.M., & McCauley, C. (1978). Vicarious acquisition of learned helplessness, JPSP, 36, 894-899.

Frankel, M. (December 17, 1995). The murder broadcasting system. The New York Times Magazine, 46, 48.

Frankel, M. (January 28, 1996). More on TV mayhem. The New York Times Magazine, 23.

Frankel, M. (February 1, 1998). 11 o'clock dreams and realities. The New York Times Magazine, 22.

Glaberson, W. (October 9, 1994). The new press criticism: News as the enemy of hope. The New York Times, Section 4, 1, 4.

Koppel, T. (November 24, 1997). Journalism under fire. The Nation, 23-24.

Lafayette, J. (September 22, 1997). Journalists hash out trust issue. Electronic Media, 1A, 35.

Levine, G. (Autumn, 1977). "Learned helplessness" and the evening news. Journal of Communication, 1997, 100-105.

Levine, G.F. (Spring, 1986). Learned helplessness in local TV news. Journalism Quarterly, 3 (1), 12-18; 23.

Levy, M.R. & Rickard, A.K. (February, 1982). Unpublished manuscript, University of Maryland.

Patterson, G.E. (1983). Out of order. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Rocky Mountain Media Watch (1997). Unpublished report, Biased news: local TV news in America.

School of Communication, University of Miami, (1997). Unpublished report, Content analysis of local news programs in eight U.S. television markets.

Scott, W. (1955). Reliability of content analysis: The case of nominal scale coding. Public Opinion Quarterly, 19, (3) 321-325.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1975). Helplessness: On depression, development and death. San Francisco: Freeman.

Starobin, P. (March/April, 1995). A generation of vipers. Columbia Journalism Review, 25-32.

Steinle, P. (1996). Live from south Florida: local TV news. Television Quarterly, 6 (4), 43-50.

Viles, P. (October 4, 1993). Dan Rather blasts TV news. Broadcasting & Cable, 12.

Winerip, M. (January 11, 1998). Looking for an 11 o'clock fix. The New York Times Magazine, 30-36, 38-40, 50, 54, 62-63.

Television News Stand-Up Reports:
A Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Market Case Study

Presented to
The Radio and Television Journalism Division
of the Association for Education in
Journalism and Mass Communication's
Annual Convention in Baltimore, Maryland
August, 1998

by
Patrick J. Sutherland
Fourth Year Doctoral Student
E.W. Scripps School of Journalism
Ohio University

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance of both Dr. Charles Clift, of the School of Telecommunications at Ohio University, and of Dr. Russell Cook, of the Communication Department at Bethany College, in the preparation of this paper.

Television News Stand-Up Reports:
A Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Market Case Study

Local television newscasts are the public's number one source for news, according to the Center for Media and Public Affairs (Grossman, 1997). Local TV newscasts are major profit centers for many stations. Some critics of the media are questioning the quality and credibility of not only local TV news, but also of the proliferating broadcast affiliate news services and of cable and the major TV networks' news operations. Bill Wheatley, vice president for news at NBC acknowledges that all of the networks "are experimenting with new approaches" and that competition today is "brutal," (McCartney, 1997). An ABC NewsOne executive recently stressed that it was important to have reporters in the field "there ready to do live shots" (McAvoy, 1997).

Edward Planer, a former vice president of news at NBC and now a journalism professor at Columbia College in Chicago stated " 'Let's face it, the news cycle has been dominated by JonBenet Ramsey, O.J. Simpson, floods and bank robberies....They are doing what is easy to do'" (McCartney 1997, p. 22). Marty Haag, a news vice president for the TV group A.H. Belo stated that covering crime is a fast and easy way for TV stations to do news coverage. Belo noted that at crime scenes, no matter what time a reporter arrives, "there's always a picture to shoot, preferably live" (Grossman, 1997).

A television news director for New York City 's Fox affiliate WNYW, Dan Berg, said that local news is driven by live events (Rose, 1997). "I think it's become a breaking news medium. You want to be the first guy out there with the breaking story, no matter what it takes" (Rose p. 44). An important element of most "live" TV news reports, at the local or network level, is the stand-upper by a reporter. Stephens (1986) defined stand-ups as on-camera reports by a journalist, often delivered standing-up at the scene of the event, which usually appear in a videotape or live news story.

Former CBS News anchorman Walter Cronkite stated that many TV reporters were more interested in becoming stars rather than journalists (Cronkite, 1993). Cronkite said "We've given birth to the 90-second reporters .... who can grind out a glib stand-upper that will scratch the patina of the story and with luck but no foresight might even include as many as two of the five W's" (Cronkite, p. 13).

The idea behind a stand-up is that the journalist on camera is serving as an on-camera guide for viewers, leading them deeper into the news story (Taylor, 1993). Critics of the stand-up technique say that the device is not necessary and that reporters may use the stand-up to inject their own opinion into news stories. Fox News' Brit Hume stated "There's no question that TV reporters have come to use the standup to say things that are more opinionated than in the body of the story" (Taylor, p. 36). But Bob Orr, Washington Bureau correspondent for CBS News defended the use of the stand-up "When print reporters put quasi-analysis into their stories, it is not necessarily wrong. Yet when TV people try to put a mini-analysis section into a piece they are criticized as being shallow" (Orr, 1996).

When stand-ups are shown from generic backdrops, is the viewer being misled? Examples of generic backdrops include unidentifiable buildings, hallways within news bureaus, and nondescript city streets. Sanit (1992) wrote that some of the generic locations are at least peripherally related to the topic of the stories being reported. According to former UPI correspondent John Newhagen, now a journalism professor at the University of Maryland, generic backdrops encourage audiences to fill in the blanks of stories with incorrect assumptions (Sanit). Gregg Ramshaw, managing producer for the then *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour* on PBS said of stand-ups "Reporters want it for ID purposes and news organizations want it to show they have an active presence at the scene" (Taylor p. 38).

It is clear that the use of live news and stand-up techniques are somewhat controversial topics inside and outside of broadcast journalism. In a limited manner, the stand-upper technique in television news may be an example of the framing theory of news first discussed two decades ago by communication scholars such as Erving Goffman (1974, 1986), and Gaye Tuchman (1978). Bryant and Zillman (1994) wrote that framing is a complicated construct because it refers to both individual and interpersonal sense-making and to the content of the process. Goffman (1986) stated that spot news coverage offered coverage of events as a type of performance. Altheide and Snow (1991) noted that a large part of a communicator's job is to design visually compelling scenes which journalists will find irresistible. The stand-up news convention might also be a partial illustration of activation theory, which is briefly summarized in the literature review section below.

The purpose of this exploratory study is to analyze how the ABC, CBS, and NBC network affiliates in the nation's 19th ranked TV market, utilize stand-upper news reports. Specifically, the researcher was interested in learning more about whether Pittsburgh TV stations utilized stand-up reports for developing stories or in stories where the event was over. Also what primary news values were advanced by stand-ups? Other research areas included the ratio of live versus taped stand-ups, the order of the stand-uppers inside a news package, stand-up lengths, and reporters' interactions with their news anchors.

Literature Review

A Brief History of the Development of TV News Stand-Uppers

NBC began experimenting with regularly scheduled television newscasts in 1940 with the program "The Esso Television Reporter" (Karnick, 1988). Regular U.S. television news operations began in 1948 and mobile TV units located in Philadelphia that year showed GOP candidate Thomas Dewey outside the Bellevue-Stratford Hotel (Frank, 1991). NBC-TV correspondent Frank Bourgholtzer could be heard, but not seen, broadcasting live from inside a train carrying President Truman into the city. Former NBC-TV News President Reuven Frank explained that print and radio news people helped television news operations stumble along between 1948 and 1952 by "....devising ways of presenting news and methods of using pictures that have become standard, accepted American fare. All were arrived at by trial and error" (Frank, p. 28).

By 1952, NBC technicians introduced viewers to a small hand-held "live" TV camera in news broadcasts featuring interviews from the floors at the 1952 Chicago . political conventions (Reuven, 1991). CBS, in 1953, began giving NBC serious competition in TV news when it came up with its own newsfilm organization (Karnick, 1988).

Half-hour network TV newscasts began on Labor Day in 1963 with Walter Cronkite at CBS, and as early as 1965 the ABC Network was using satellites to broadcast sporting events "live" from Moscow (Gunther, 1994). In the 1960s, filmed stand-upper news reports from the Vietnam conflict were becoming controversial. Morely Safer of CBS nearly lost his job after using a stand-up report about the burning of a Vietnam village by U.S. Marines (Emery & Emery, 1984).

By 1974, videotape mini-cameras began to be used at network affiliate TV stations around the country (Yoakam & Cremer, 1985). The late NBC correspondent Tom Pettit, in 1976, developed the method of the "live" on-camera from the field leading or tagging of a well researched background report (Yoakam & Cremer). More recently, live stand-upper reports were common from the Persian Gulf War, including one broadcast of a cruise missile sailing over the head of CNN's Peter Arnett in Iraq (Kellner, 1992).

To date, little academic research has been done on the uses or effects of stand-up television news reports. Olson (1992) studied the use of speculation by CBS-TV correspondents on the CBS Evening News with Dan Rather from 1984-1987. Olson's study concentrated on language usage by reporters, including during stand-up reports. He concluded that a significant number of reporters predicted future outcomes of national stories without careful attribution of sources.

Hjarvard (1992) wrote that the live report has now become the ideal in television news, and that it also alters TV journalists' news values. Hjarvard said viewers were now demanding up-to-the-minute pictures. He concluded that contemporary TV newscasts seldom offer conclusive summaries but rather continual "updates." Hjarvard wrote: "The journalist shall not only relate what has happened/is happening in the form of what he/she has experienced, but the story should actually be based on 'personal, first-hand experience'" (p. 120).

Lin (1992) studied audience selectivity of local television newscasts and found that the reporting scope and quality of stories were the most important factors motivating audiences to watch a particular newscast. Lin's research found that the format/style of local television newscasts was the least important criteria in determining which newscast to watch.

Behnke and Miller (1992) investigated viewer reactions to content and presentational formats of television news. They stated that activation theory explains how viewers are aroused by news programming material, they then adapt to the material, and viewer interest in the programming may then unpredictably rise substantially. Behnke and Miller found that "....vividly depicted stories of accidents, crashes, violence, catastrophic illness, unemployment problems and other negative events produced the highest individual interest ratings, along with action sequences such as an exciting demonstration of modern military jet aircraft (p. 664).

Steinle (1993) profiled WSVN Channel 7 TV news in Miami and concluded the station was a slave to "TV news of the visual". He said "Seven News utilizes all the video, graphic, and sound techniques it can conjure up to create a news spectacle. But this slavish commitment to production is not matched with an equally slavish commitment to news gathering" (Steinle, p. 49).

Lind (1995) studied viewer perceptions of quality and responsibility concerning TV news and noted that while viewers are increasingly dependent upon TV news, they are often not critical of it. Lind did note that the news media's credibility has dropped sharply since 1984 but that the public seems inconsistent concerning favorability ratings. In other words, people are relying more on television for most of their news while at the same time expressing concern over television news quality.

Ehrlich (1996) wrote of broadcast journalism's dilemma of needing to respect the storytelling tradition so that TV news viewers will watch, while also not pandering or "descending into sleaze." Goodman and Manners (1997) studied words and pictures in television news. They concluded that TV news viewers were familiar with the basic visual and language news conventions without being consciously aware of it. Goodman and Manners cited the use of conversational language by reporters, effective lighting, graphics, and conventional video shots.

Methodology

A content analysis was performed on a total of 105 six p.m. Pittsburgh television market newscasts airing during six weeks in February and March of 1997. The six p.m. newscasts tend to be the most highly rated local newscasts in the market. Stations included in the analysis were the ABC network affiliate WTAE Channel 4, CBS affiliate KDKA Channel 2, and NBC affiliate WPXI Channel 11. The FOX affiliate in Pittsburgh, WPGH Channel 53, does not air a six p.m. newscast. KDKA's six p.m. newscast airs until seven p.m., but for purposes of this study, stories airing after 6:30 p.m. were not analyzed.

The unit of analysis was news, sports, or weather package stories, containing a stand-upper report, which aired during the half-hour newscasts. A total of 471 packages containing stand-ups were coded. The coding instrument (See Appendix) was composed based upon standard news values and broadcast news reporting conventions summarized by Stephens (1986) and Gibson (1991). Significance was defined at news stories of great magnitude. Relevant stories reflected an impact on the local audience. Prominence was defined as stories involving recognizable, and often contemporary people of interest to the audience. Gibson wrote that the news value of proximity meant how near was the news event to the audience. Conflict stories were defined as those involving controversy, opposition and/or disagreement surrounding an event. Gibson stated that the human interest news value involved empathy on the part of the viewer towards people depicted in the news event. Unusualness concerned something out of the ordinary about the story.

Overall intercoder reliability, established on the basis of agreement was 91%.

In-depth interviews were also done with five broadcast reporters and news executives in the Pittsburgh market. Additionally, interviews with several network news correspondents were completed as a part of this study.

Results

Of the 471 total news, sports, or weather package reports containing stand-uppers, 86% were shown during news segments, approximately 13% were inside sports segments, and less than 1% of the stand-ups were during weather segments. A chi-square analysis was performed and the significant results are reported.

As shown below in Table 1, 85% of the packages containing a stand-up contained at least one live stand-upper segment.

TABLE 1

Live or Taped Stand-upper by Newscast

	Count	NEWSCAST			
LIVETAPE		KDKA 1	WTAE 2	WPXI 3	Row Total
Live	1	107	120	172	399 84.7
Taped	2	15	53	4	72 15.3
	Column Total	122 25.9	173 36.7	176 37.4	471 100.0

Chi Square = 55.33512 df= 2 p < .01

Table 2 shows that 38% of all 471 stand-upper reports were in news packages coded as consisting of relevant news, followed by 21% of stand-uppers appearing in conflict stories, and 16% of stand-up reports in human interest stories. WPXI Channel 11 (NBC) led the Pittsburgh market in the number of stand-uppers coded as relevant at 55% of their total stand-up reports. WTAE Channel 4 (ABC) was second in percentage of stand-uppers defined as relevant with 33% of their total stand-uppers. KDKA Channel 2 (CBS) had a total of 21% of their stand-up reports as relevant.

The station featuring the highest percentage of stand-ups with conflict as the primary news value was WTAE at 24%, followed by KDKA at 22 %. WTAE and KDKA also featured approximately the same percentage of stand-up reports coded as having human interest as the primary news value at 23% and 22% respectively.

TABLE 2

Primary News Value by Newscast

VALUE	NEWSCAST KDKA 1	 WTAE 2	 WPXI 3	Row Total
Significance	15	15	12	42 8.9
Prominence	6	4	4	14 3.0
Proximity	7	1		8 1.7
Conflict	27	41	31	99 21.1
Unusualness	13	15	21	49 10.4
Human Interest	27	40	12	79 16.8
Relevance	26	57	96	179 38.1
Column Total	121 25.7	173 36.8	176 37.4	470 100.0

1 Observation coded as unknown

Chi Square = 62.56167 df = 12 p < .01

Table 3 shows that 41% of live stand-upper reports concerned news stories of relevance followed by 22% of live stand-uppers featuring conflict and 12% on human interest. The most common primary news value featured in taped stand-uppers was human interest at 43%, followed by relevance at 20%.

TABLE 3

Live or Taped Stand-upper by Primary News Value

LIVETAPE	VALUE Significance 1	 Prominence 2	 Proximity 3	 Conflict 4	 Unusualness 5	 Human Interest 6	 Relevance 7	 Unknown 8	Row Total
Live	37	12	8	88	41	48	164	1	399 84.7
Taped	5	2		11	8	31	15		72 15.3
Column Total	42 8.9	14 3.0	8 1.7	99 21.0	49 10.4	79 16.8	179 38.0	1 .2	471 100.0

Chi Square = 44.97723 df = 7 p < .01

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Stand-upper reports occurred in developing stories just over 57% of the time and just over 42% of the time in news stories in which the event/issue was over. As Table 4 shows regarding developing stories, 44%, were stories of relevance, while stand-uppers occurring at events which were already over primarily featured news values of relevance, 30%, and conflict 25%.

Table 4

Stand-upper in Developing or Event Over by Primary News Value

LOC	VALUE Significance 1	Prominence 2	Proximity 3	Conflict 4	Unusualness 5	Human interest 6	Relevance 7	Row Total
Developing	26	6	6	49	12	53	120	272 57.9
Event over	16	8	2	50	37	26	59	198 42.1
Column Total	42 8.9	14 3.0	8 1.7	99 21.1	49 10.4	79 16.8	179 38.1	470 100.0

1 Missing Observation Coded as "Unknown"

Chi Square = 36.70629 df = 6 p < .01

Regarding the location of stand-up segments inside the Pittsburgh TV 6 p.m. newscast reports, 85% of the reports began with a stand-upper, just 52% of the news reports had bridge (transition) stand-uppers, and 91% of the news reports ended with a stand-upper.

While 75% of the stand-up reports featured a conversational first name exchange between the reporter and anchorperson, just 10% of the 471 stand-upper reports analyzed contained a question and answer exchange between the reporter in the field and the anchorperson. More than 80% of these question and answer exchanges happened on KDKA Channel 2, the CBS affiliate. See Table 5.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE 5

Question and Answer Interaction During Stand-Up Reporter/Anchor by Newscast

NEWSCAST

TOTALT	KDKA 1	WTAE 2	WPXI 3	Row Total
2:00+	29		3	32 66.7
1:30-1:59	8	1	2	11 22.9
1:00-1:29	3	1		4 8.3
<1:00'		1	2.1	1
Column Total	40 83.3	3 6.3	5 10.4	48 100.0

Chi Square = 20.86477 df = 6 p < .01

Just over half of the total packages containing stand-up reports, 52%, featured an on-camera interview between a reporter and a source. Table 6 shows that 41% of all news packages containing stand-uppers lasted between one and a-half to one minute 59 seconds, while 28% of the stand-up packages lasted more than two minutes, and 24% timed out between one minute and 90 seconds.

WTAE-TV 4 (ABC) featured the briefest news packages with 42% of their stories timing out between one and one and a-half minutes, and 16% of their stand-ups timing out at less than one minute. Most of WPXI-TV 11's (NBC) stand-up packages, 56%, lasted between one and a-half to one minute 59 seconds, and KDKA-TV 2 (CBS) featured 51% of its stand-up news packages at over two minutes or over.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

TABLE 6
Total Time of Package by Newscast

TOTALT	KDKA 1	WTAE 2	WPXI 3	Row Total
2.00+	62	14	57	133 28.2
1:30-1:59	35	58	98	191 40.6
1:00-1:29	23	72	18	113 24.0
<1:00'	2	29	3	34 7.2
Column Total	122 25.9	173 36.7	176 37.4	471 100.0

Chi Square = 136.39485 df = 6 p < .01

In terms of total "face time" for reporters during stand-up news packages, KDKA reporters got the most exposure as Table 7 shows. 58% of KDKA's stand-up packages featured reporters on-camera in the field for 40 seconds or longer. WTAE reporters were on camera the least, 49% of their total stand-up times lasted between 20 and 40 seconds and 35% of the WTAE stand-up packages had reporters on-camera for under 20 seconds. At WPXI, 77% of the stand-up news packages had reporters on-camera between 20 and 40 seconds per report.

TABLE 7
Total Time of Standup by Newscast

TOTALS	KDKA 1	WTAE 2	WPXI 3	Row Total
> 40	71	28	34	133 28.2
20- 40	31	85	135	251 53.3
< 20'	20	60	7	87 18.5
Column Total	122 25.9	173 36.7	176 37.4	471 100.0

Chi Square = 134.01320 df = 4 p < .01

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Discussion

The Pittsburgh television market appears to be following the trend, identified earlier in this paper, of local television news operations opting for more live on-the-scene coverage. KDKA-TV 2, the CBS affiliate, consistently earns the top ratings in the six o'clock news race in Pittsburgh and results of this study confirm perceived differences between KDKA-TV news and its competitors.

KDKA News Director Mark Barryhill said while his shop is primarily conservative, the news staff is also aggressive and takes an interactive approach with the viewer (Barryhill, 1997). Barryhill stated that it is natural to see a reporter in a news piece due to our visually driven society. Data from the content analysis show KDKA news anchors and reporters interact often during stand-up reports and the CBS affiliate features relatively long on-camera times during stand-up reports.

CBS Network News Anchor Dan Rather did a stand-up in Pittsburgh for KDKA on February 20th, 1997, during ratings sweeps. Rather could be seen standing at Mount Washington overlooking the downtown skyline as he was interviewed by the local KDKA anchors back at the studio. KDKA often uses the "double box" framing of anchor/reporter in the field on the screen simultaneously. While WTAE Channel 4 (ABC and WPXI Channel 11 (NBC) also use the "double box" technique, WTAE generally flashed the double box for only a few seconds while WPXI's anchors usually did not interview their field reporters on-air.

WPXI's six p.m. news offered four news segments to their competitors' three segments per half-hour. While about one-third of the WPXI stand-up news packages lasted for two minutes or more, there was little interaction on-camera between reporters in the field and anchors in the studio. Tracy Fox, assistant news director at WPXI, said that station policy required all reporter packages to be fronted live (Fox, 1997). Fox stated that

WPXI news reporters were encouraged to lead the viewer through important events of a news story. She said stand-up reports further the storytelling and that the journalistic factors of immediacy, location, interaction and context of the story were primary reasons for WPXI's live report emphasis. Fox stressed that attribution by reporters was an extremely important part of TV news and that the industry did seem to be moving away from consistent attribution.

Some 55% of WPXI news packages containing stand-ups were coded as being primarily relevant stories which Gibson (1991) defined as having some immediate impact on the viewer. The percentage of relevant news packages at both WTAE and KDKA was considerably less. WPXI anchors and reporters also made consistent references to video shots taken from "Chopper 11."

WTAE Channel 4, the ABC affiliate in Pittsburgh, definitely aired briefer news packages. 58% of all its field reports lasted under 90 seconds and only 8% of WTAE news packages timed out at two minutes or more. WTAE also aired the most news packages with conflict identified as the primary news value, although, in terms of percentages, WTAE and KDKA news packages contained similar proportions of stories featuring both conflict and human interest angles (See Table 2).

Assistant news director at WTAE, Debbie Bush said that approximately 10 years ago it was rare for reporters in the field to be seen "live," but that today WTAE strives for a live background. The live stand-up production technique, according to Bush, is generally interesting and fast paced. Bush stated that the three stations competing for the 6 p.m. news audience in Pittsburgh occasionally share live TV trucks.

Of the three Pittsburgh stations analyzed, WTAE allotted the least time on-camera to its field reporters with 84% of the packages showing the reporter for 40 seconds or less. Former WTAE consumer affairs reporter Yvonne Zanos, who since has joined KDKA, stated that the norm was that management wanted to see the reporter in the news packages

(Zanos, 1997). Zanos said that due to her specialty, consumer reporting, she injected herself into her TV packages more often than the average reporter might. She noted that stand-ups may be used when reporters don't have a visual transition for the story. Zanos said she also saw the utility in the use of walking stand-ups, as long as the movement made sense. She favored close-up shots of her interview subjects rather than two shots, but stated that the number and use of stand-ups by reporters was primarily influenced by the policy of the news director at a particular station.

In the Pittsburgh TV market, stand-up news stories featuring conflict were a distant second to relevant stories. This analysis showed that most stand-up reports in Pittsburgh 6 p.m. news packages were done at the end of the news story, although nearly as many stories led with a stand-up. The number one rated 6 p.m. newscast of KDKA featured longer stand-up reports with greater interaction among reporters in the field and the anchor people in the studio.

Conclusion

This exploratory case study of news packages containing stand-uppers in the six o'clock newscasts in the Pittsburgh television market lends support to current and some former news practitioners' observations that local TV news often emphasizes live field reporters featuring reporter stand-ups. More than four out of five news packages with stand-ups contained a live element. Well over half of the stand-up reports featured developing stories involving the primary news value of relevance to the viewer. This may be a surprising finding for some critics of television news, showing that in Pittsburgh at least, stories with stand-ups featuring conflict as the primary news value were not predominant. Although the data did show that news packages involving conflict did comprise 20% of the total field reports. Most of the stand-up reports in the Pittsburgh market were at the sites of developing stories, yet, four out of 10 news stand-ups showed reporters at the scene of a news story that was over. This finding shows that perhaps technological advances such as live satellite trucks, have substantially changed the way Pittsburgh TV stations air their news. The data collected from the Pittsburgh case study indicated the three six p.m. TV newscasts offered different journalistic and style approaches in their news packages, from varying emphases on primary news values, to differing interactions between anchorpersons and reporters, the length of news packages and of time field reporters were on-camera at the scene.

Summarizing some key findings concerning differences in the three Pittsburgh television stations' 6 p.m. newscasts, KDKA-TV 2 the ratings leader, offered far fewer total stand-up reports but the length of KDKA news packages featuring stand-ups tended to last longer than competing stations. By far, KDKA featured the most interaction between reporters in the field and anchorpersons in the studio. This in-depth question and answer type of reporting could be one of the factors leading to higher local news ratings for the CBS affiliate.

WPXI-TV 11, the NBC affiliate, heavily promoted its newscasts as featuring live reports, yet even with an additional news segment in its newscast compared to its competitors, WTAE nearly matched the number of stand-up reports by WPXI. Nearly 90% of WPXI's stand-up news reports lasted over 90 seconds, yet, only 2% of those stand-up reports featured question and answer exchanges between WPXI reporters and news anchors.

At WTAE-TV 4, the ABC affiliate, nearly 60% of its stand-up news reports lasted under 90 seconds. One in six stand-up reports on WTAE lasted under one minute, a far greater percentage of short reports than either of its competitors. Channel 4 also featured reporters on camera for the least amount of time during their stand-ups. WTAE's pacing appears to be rapid, but like WPXI, only about 2% of WTAE reports during this study featured question and answer interaction between stand-up reporters and studio anchorpersons.

Perhaps the disagreements over broadcast journalism approaches between network news operations and local TV news outlets will be never ending. Toriah Tolley of CNN Headline News, has said that local news operations in the U.S. with limited budgets, may tend to over do the number of live stand-up reports. But, she added that the number of live reports with the accompanying lack of context, tends to be a problem across all levels of electronic journalism today (Tolley, 1997).

Limitations of this study included the omission of the local Fox television affiliate due to the lack of a six p.m. newscast and the lack of data gathered from other time periods in the local news competition. This study did not systematically examine the backgrounds behind reporters doing stand-up news reports in the field.

Future research might examine the use of stand-ups by network television and cable news operations. Future studies in the area might combine personal researcher observations of news operations with systematic data gathering. Also, comparison of local news coverage approaches in varying geographic markets of similar sizes might lend clarification to claims by critics and TV news practitioners concerning the apparent standardization of newscast content and styles trends in the U.S.

References

Altheide, D., & Snow, R. (1991). Media Worlds in the Postjournalism Era. New York: Aldine De Gruyter.

Barryhill, M. (1997). News Director. KDKA-TV Pittsburgh. Personal conversation. July 30, 1997.

Behnke, R., and Miller P. (1992). Viewer reactions to content and presentational format of television news. Journalism Quarterly 69, no. 3, 659-665.

Bryant, J., & Zillman, D. (1994). Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Bush, D. (1998). Assistant News Director, WTAE-TV Pittsburgh. Personal conversation. February 3, 1998.

Cronkite. W. (1993). Bashing broadcast news. Editor & Publisher 126, no. 52, 13.

Emery, E., & Emery, M. (1984). The Press & America. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Ehrlich, M. C. (1996). The journalism of outrageousness: tabloid television news vs. investigative news. Journalism Monographs 155, 1-24.

Fox, T. (1997). Assistant News Director, WPXI-TV Pittsburgh. Personal conversation. August 14, 1997.

Frank, R. (1991). Out of Thin Air. New York : Simon & Schuster.

Gibson, R. (1991). Radio and television reporting. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Goffman, E. (1986 ed.). Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1974.

Goodman, S., & Manners, P. (1997). Making it 'real,: words and pictures in television news. Language & Communication 17, no. 1, 53-66.

Grossman, L. K. (1997). Why local TV news is so awful. Columbia Journalism Review 36, no. 4, 21-22.

Gunther, M. (1994). The House That Roone Built. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

Hjarvard, S. (1992). "Live:" On time and space in television news. The Nordicom Review of Nordic Mass Communication Research no. 2, 111-126.

Karnick, K. B. (1988). NBC and the innovation of television news, 1945-1953. Journalism History 15, no. 1, 26-34.

Kellner, D. (1992). The Persian Gulf TV War. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.

Lin, C.A. (1992). Audience selection of local television newscasts. Journalism Quarterly 69, no. 2, 373-382.

Lind., R. A. (1995). How can tv news be improved?: viewer perceptions of quality and responsibility. Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media 39, no. 3, 360-375.

McAvoy, K. (1997). Live news: the competitive edge. Broadcasting & Cable 127, no. 30, 30-31.

McCartney, J. (1997). News lite. American Journalism Review 19, no. 5, 18-23.

Olson, E. (1992). Predicting the news: the use of speculation on the CBS evening news with dan rather, 1984-1987. Master's Thesis, Regent University.

Orr, B. (1996). CBS News Washington Correspondent. Personal conversation. February 28,. 1996.

Rose, B. (1997). Steering the six o'clock report. Television Quarterly 28, no. 4, 41-48.

Sanit, T. (1992). Stand and deliver. Columbia Journalism Review 31, no. 2, 15-16.

Steinle, P. (1993). Live from south florida: local tv news. Television Quarterly 26, no. 4, 43-50.

Stephens, M. (1986). Broadcast news (2nd ed.). New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Taylor, S. (1993). The standup syndrome. American Journalism Review 15, no.6, 35-38.

Tolley, T. (1997). CNN Headline News Anchor, Atlanta. Personal conversation. September 10, 1997.

Tuchman, G. (1978). Making News. Boston: Free Press.

Yoakam, R., & Cremer, C. (1985). ENG: Television News and the New Technology. Carbondale, Illinois: Random House, Inc.

Zanos, Y. (1997). Consumer Affairs Reporter WTAE-TV Pittsburgh. Personal Conversation. July 29, 1997.

Appendix

Pittsburgh TV News Stand-Upper Coding Sheet-Sutherland

Case Number (Do not fill-in) _ _ _ 01-03/

TV Newscast _ 04/
1= KDKA-TV 2 (CBS)
2=WTAE-TV 4 (ABC)
3=WPXI-TV 11 (NBC)

Date (Year-Month-Day) _ _ _ _ _ _ 05-10/

Newscast Segment _ 11/
1=News
2=Sports
3=Weather

Stand-upper Specifications
Live (1) or Taped (2) _ 12/

Reporter on location at: _ 13/
1-Developing story
2-Event over

Advances primary news value (Gibson 1991) of: _ 14/
1=Significance
2=Prominence
3=Proximity
4=Conflict
5=Unusualness
6=Human interest
7=Relevance (impact)
8=Unknown

Coder Comments:
____
____

Location(s) of stand-upper in report _ _ _ 15-17/
1=Opener (15)
2=Bridge (16)
3=Close (17)

Interaction with news anchor _ _ 18-19/
1=First name exchange (18)
2=Question/answer exchange (19)

Interview of source during stand-upper? _ 20/
1=Yes
2=No

Total time of news report package including stand-up: _ 21/
1= 2:00 or over
2=1:30 to 1:59
3=1:00 to 1:29
4=Under 1:00

Total time of stand-upper segments inside the package: _ 22/
1= Over :40 2=:20 to :40 3=Under :20

Youth voters in 1996:
Searching for political information
from television news

Karon R. Speckman, Ph.D.
Communication Department
Truman State University
310 McClain Hall
Kirksville, MO 63501
660-785-7231 or 573-449-6649
e-mail: speckman@truman.edu

Abstract

Turnout for youth in 1996 was only 33% compared with 37% in 1988 and 38% in 1992. This paper explores the role of television in providing information to young voters. News abstracts from ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN -- available from the Vanderbilt Television News Archives -- were examined from September 1, 1996, to November 9, 1996, for coverage and ties to youth voters. Issues of importance to youth, as defined by various national polls, were not covered adequately, nor were stories tied to them as voters. Youths also were not used as sources.

Youth voters in 1996: Searching for political information from television news

Karon R. Speckman, Ph.D.
Communication Department
Truman State University
310 McClain Hall
Kirksville, MO 63501
660-785-7231 or 573-449-6649
e-mail: speckman@truman.edu

**Presented to the Radio-Television Journalism Division,
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication,
1998 national meeting, Baltimore**

Youth voters in 1996: Searching for political information from television news

1996 marked the 25-year anniversary of lowering America's voting age from 21 to 18. With the 1971 ratification of the Twenty-sixth Amendment, the United States was the fifty-first nation to grant 18 year olds the right to vote (Cultice, 1992). How did most eligible youth voters choose to celebrate the anniversary? By staying home from the polls.

Only 33% of 18-29 year olds voted in the 1996 presidential election (Minzesheimer and Moore, 1996), with only 48.8% of the total voting age choosing to vote in the 1996 election (Vobejda, 1996). Overall turnout has not been that low since the 1924 election turnout of 43.8% (Rosenthal, 1996). In 1972, about 18% of the total electorate was made up of 18-25 year olds (Cultice). Of that age, 48.3% voted.

In 1988, only 37% of 18-21 year olds voted (Huerta, 1996). But the country saw a slight increase in 1992 of 38% voting in the 1992 election with "Rock the Vote" and other youth campaigns sparking more interest (Whitney, 1995). First-time voters dropped from 11% in 1992 to 9% in 1996 despite the new voter registration law that produced almost 9 million new registered voters (Minzesheimer, 1996, Nov. 7).[1] The new "motor voter" law was to be the answer to the registration hurdle often touted as a reason for low turnout (Jackson, 1994). An estimated 6 million people under 30 were added to voting rolls with the 18-30 age group making up 24% of the voting-age population in 1996 (Gonnerman, 1996).

---

[1] A lower estimate suggests that the motor-voter law registered five million, still making registration the highest since 1968 (Schmitt, Nov. 7, 1996).

Although reporting figures differ on whether youth voters are considered to age 25 or age 29, comparing 1972 with 1996 is still useful. In 1972, 48.3% voted (ages 18-25); in 1996, 33% voted (ages 18-29). The new registration laws are increasing the numbers registered, but the laws are not increasing youth turnout. Although some claim that "alienation" or a feeling of not being connected to government is what keeps youth from voting, that explanation may not be true.

This paper explores what role television news had in providing information to the young voter. ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN news abstracts for the period September 1, 1996, through November 9, 1996, were examined for coverage of topics important to young voters, coverage of youth as a voting unit, and coverage of turnout stories that focused on the low youth turnout. This paper argues that the "alienation" of youth may result from youth not having ample information to make decisions, even in our information-rich society. Many youths use television news for their political information. When youths turn to television news, it is framed in ways to support their feelings that politicians do not discuss issues. News does not make political discourse appealing.

The paper's first section examines theories for low voter turnout -- all voters and youth voters. Then youth media habits and how people process political information is examined. The next section explains the methodology for the study, followed by results and discussion and conclusions sections.

Theories for low voter turnout

All voters

Decreasing voting turnout is not solely a youth problem. Overall voting turnout started to decline in the 60s. From 1960-1980, voting participation in American presidential elections decreased from 65.4% of the eligible voting age population to 55.1% (Teixeira, 1987). The 1988 participation figure of 50% was the lowest since 1924 (Flanigan & Zingale, 1991). Three central political problems existed with lower voting rates during the 80s: deterioration of political parties, disillusionment with the quality of government, and reduction of possibilities for involvement of citizens (Gans, 1990). A 1990 poll showed that more than 6 in 10 American adults surveyed "feel a sense of powerlessness and disenchantment with the people running the nation's major institutions" (Uebling, 1991, p. 30).

So it was a surprise that the 1992 election turned out the highest rate of voters since 1968 — 55.3% or 104.5 million voters (GAO Report on Voter Turnout, 1993). Included in that increase were 13 million new voters (Cook, May 15, 1993). Analysts credited a variety of reasons for the 1992 upswing including Perot's third party movement, aging of the electorate, recession, voter registration ease, and candidates' use of non-traditional media (Cook, May 15, 1995).

But even the high 1992 turnout had skeptics. Some analysts claimed that the country could not rest on its laurels because the 55.3% was not that high compared to the 75-85% in 19th C. America or other countries (Lewis, McCracken, & Hunt, 1994). Gans said that alienation and disenchantment were still rampant in the electorate despite the modest increases in 1992 and 1994, and causes were varied (Gans, 1995). Those causes included citizen cynicism of government and an increase of cynicism by the press about politics and public affairs. Other reasons given by Gans were decline in quality of education — especially commitment to civic education, the gap between rich and poor, lack of party leadership, citizens' dependence on television for seven hours a day, and the ineffectiveness of government to deal with complex issues.

Proof of the disenchantment theory may have been the angry mood of the 1994 elections and the continued activity of third party candidates in 1996. Also, young voters' alienation from the political system on a national level showed up before the 1996 election (McLeod and Cooper, 1996). Thus, lack of participation and alienation from the political process continued to be a problem before the 1996 election. The 1996 less-than-half of potential voters turnout brought various explanations for the voting behavior ranging from "[voters] didn't feel were participating in a great drama" to media focusing on polls rather than issues (Minzesheimer, p. 3A).

The continuing decline is alarming because it "takes away accountability if elected officials know the public isn't watching" (Wolfinger in Minzesheimer & Moore, 1996, p. 4A). Because nonvoters tend to be younger, poorer, and members of minority groups, they aren't involved in determining policy and a classist society is created. States with higher turnouts have more fair taxes and the smallest gaps in incomes between rich and poor (Minzesheimer & Moore).

A Northwestern University Medill News Service survey divided the unlikely to vote into five groups. Of those five groups, three included youth. Those three were: "the unplugged," younger and less affluent with negative views of government who think campaigns don't relate to them; the "don't knows," who leave politics to others; and "the alienated," with negative attitude toward politics. The news service co-director said, "it's scary that now children of nonvoters are not voting" (Shearer in Minzesheimer, p. 3A).

Youth turnout

Gans said the reason for low 1996 youth turnout was that the candidates were uninspiring (Gans in Ostrowidzki, 1996, p. A10). Gans also reiterated previous criticisms that many parents are not voting, setting a bad example for children, and that schools have shifted the emphasis from citizenship toward training for jobs.

Polls show that "teenagers' interest in politics is low, and that's because they lack information and don't believe their vote will make a difference" (Huerta, p. D1). An annual survey by the Higher Education Institute at UCLA showed that of incoming freshmen at colleges across the country, only 28.5% kept up with political affairs, contrasted with 42.5% in 1990 and 57.8% in 1966 (Huerta).

Students said that voting was a waste of time and would not make a difference (Whitney, 1995). Gans added, "They've become confused about national goals, the weakening of the political parties, political scandals magnified by television, and 30-second-spot campaigning" (Gans in Whitney, p. 1A). Those studying this generation have found a "strong libertarian streak that leaves them disaffected from either major party. They distrust authority and institutions." (Chandler, 1996, p. CO1).

Determining which issues appealed to this age group differed according to survey and source. Some said that this generation is worried about what will happen to them with the burden of paying for baby boomers' medical and pension benefits when the large retirement bubble hits in 15 years (Chandler, 1996; Woodruff, 1996). Others say that despite older voter concerns that young people are interested in waging general warfare with elders over entitlements, youth place that issue toward the bottom of priorities (Booth, 1996).

A Youth Vote '96 survey showed that crime and drugs ranked as the most important issues (Reuters, 1996), and a Heinz Family Foundation showed young people are worried most about education, followed by jobs and economy, crime and drugs, and taxes (Depledge, 1996). Still another survey showed their top concerns in order were crime, education, high taxes, unemployment, and welfare reform (Booth, 1996). Another study showed that crime and drugs were the most worrisome issues facing the 18-30s, followed by the budget (Reuters, 1996). Like older American voters, the ones who responded to campaigns leaned toward issues of jobs, crime, and the cost of education (Diamond, Donaldson-Evans, & Ginsberg, 1996).

A *Newsweek* poll reported that 18-29% of potential young voters did not care very much who won the 1996 election and 39% of young adults felt government leaders cannot make progress because "our problems have become so complicated" (Leland & McCormick, 1996, p. 33).

But youth voters may not be any more turned off than older voters. Seventy-two percent of nonvoters and 73% of voters said they could never or only sometimes trust the federal government, and 73% of nonvoters and 69% of voters said that big interests run the political show, according to a League of Women Voters poll ("Voters won't vote unless political discourse changes," 1996). Thirty-two percent of voters said they had enough accurate information to vote while 15% of nonvoters said they had enough. Poll results showed that "alienation is real, but other factors are also at play. Such as confusion. And a lack of information. And age. And a wider alienation in society and culture" ("Voters...", p. 28). So who is more likely to vote? Those connected to the community. However, youths do not fit that description because many are switching residences and jobs faster than other age groups.

Although leaders of Youth Vote '96, a drive to boost 96 turnout, predicted a record turnout of 12 million young voters (Chandler), 1996 was different from 1992 because Democrats did not try to attract youth in 1996 (Savidge, 1996). Both candidates paid more attention to senior citizens and "soccer moms" than youth (Gonnerman). Dole did try to connect with the younger voter by giving his WEB address on the first debate; however, it was wrong. Clinton focused more on taxes and spent less time wooing the vote on MTV and other alternative media as he had done in 1992. The inattention was somewhat surprising because there are more eligible voters today under 30 than there are over 60 ("Young voters," 1996). In 1992, 38% of voters under 30 turned out to vote, perhaps hooking into Perot's anti-government pitch.

Much scholarship has focused on the downward trend in participation on the national level ranging from citizen alienation from government (Abramson and Aldrich in Flanigan and Zingale, 1991) to ascent of media-controlled campaigns coupled with the descent of political parties (Wattenberg, 1990).

Nonparticipation is a problem that cuts across generations. However, youth may never develop the sense of responsibility of voting. As they get older, voting turnout may be even lower.

Media habits of youth and how process political information

For all ages, newspapers are losing their importance, and television has become the principal medium of campaign communication with television news the most important vehicle used to discern issues differences between candidates (Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner, 1994; Brians & Wattenberg, 1996). Polls on how many 18-30 year olds regularly watch television news vary from 22% (Gonnerman) to 85% of 18-to 30 year olds watching local or national news on television at least two or three times a week (Chandler, p. CO1.) One poll said a third of youth get their political information from late-night comedians' political jokes (Gonnerman).

If television news is the information vehicle of choice for youth voters, is the information adequate or presented in a way to bring them to the polling booth? Often, television news focuses on candidates over political parties as sources of voter identity and decision making (Chaffee, Zhao, & Leshner).

Graber maintains that processing political information does not involve alienation by the voter but rather results from mismatches in news framing or how the message is shaped to capture its essence (Graber, 1994). Framing mismatches include nonuser-friendly formats on television that "make it too much trouble to extract information that is deemed boring and hard to process," the lack of news being framed to give voters answers about things directly relating to their lives, and the unattractive way in which most election stories are framed as the campaign drags out over several months (Graber, p. 332).

Studies have shown that television news is mostly framed in an episodic manner as opposed to thematic so that viewers do not see political problems as society problems as much as the responsibility of individuals (Iyengar, 1991). Another framing device for election news is horse race coverage with an emphasis on game strategy as opposed to a governing strategy (Patterson, 1994; Teixeira, 1992). The changes in modern television news to more game strategy and to shorter sound bites are not all negative because the public finds how the image-making of candidates work. However, viewers seldom hear candidates for more than 20 seconds, and viewers are not receiving serious political debate about issues from television news (Hallin, 1997). Also, it is difficult to learn from television because newscasts are transitory and cannot be reread; the learning of content must occur quickly (Robinson & Levy, 1986).

Thus, for youth, perhaps even more so than older Americans who use newspapers more for issue coverage and explanations, television news could be a detriment to processing political information and bringing them to the polls. Simplifying the registration process may have been enough if we viewed voting in the traditional, sequential, two-step process when voters choose to vote and then choose a candidate (Milbrath, 1981; Campbell and others, 1960). However, the two-step voting choice theory has been countered by scholarship showing that voting requires the simultaneous act of choosing to vote and choosing among candidates (Fishbein, Middlestadt, & Chung, 1985). Voters consider all alternatives (choice of candidates and participation) simultaneously, and the two-step process even may be reversed. This simultaneous model suggests that presenting good choices is as relevant as educating voters about the importance of voting. But voters need to understand about the choices and be able to a acquire useful information. Downs' theory of voting is that voters maximize benefits and minimize costs. Many times it is rational not to seek information if the costs of acquiring information exceed the benefits derived from the information (Downs, 1957).

If we then accept television as one of the main sources for youth voters, it is useful to study campaign coverage in 1996 and see how it measured up as an effective information tool about issues and tying election coverage to youths' concerns.

Method

Television evening news abstracts from ABC, CBS, NBC, and CNN from the

Vanderbilt Television News Archive were examined.[2] The abstracts give length of story, the topic or issue discussed, the visuals, and who was interviewed. A drawback of using the abstracts is that they are not full text so sometimes it is difficult to analyze how an issue, etc. was covered. For this reason, this study looked mainly at topics and issue categories although some framing issues were examined.

Although modern campaigns start much earlier than the traditional Labor Day or post-convention push, this study included only stories from September 1, 1996, through November 9, 1996. Because other media outlets reported the lower percentage of youth voters than in 1992, stories four days past the election were examined for references to the lower turnout. The disadvantage of using this time frame is that by this time many viewers or possible voters had already made up their minds whether to participate in the political system based on primary/caucus coverage.

Coding categories included the network, date, length of story, topics of coverage, specific issue coverage, whether issues coverage focused on candidate differences or party differences, mentioning of youth voters as a voting unit, mentioning of other groups as a voting unit, and whether issues were tied to voter concerns. Topics of coverage included results of network's own tracking poll; results of other organization's or media's poll; political scandal such as campaign funding, sex scandal, or character and ethics; strategy coverage -- what candidates were doing to win, which strategy they were using, where they were campaigning; ad analysis; issues; and other topics. Issue coverage included medical/pension benefits problems, balancing the budget, foreign policy, campaign funding, crime problems in the U.S., taxes, and drugs. A team of two coders pre-tested and then coded the stories. The network, date and length of story resulted in a 100% reliability with the other categories resulting in an 85% reliability.

---

[2] Network evening news abstracts are from Vanderbilt Television News Archive, http://tvnews.vanderbilt.edu/.

Results and discussion

Topic coverage

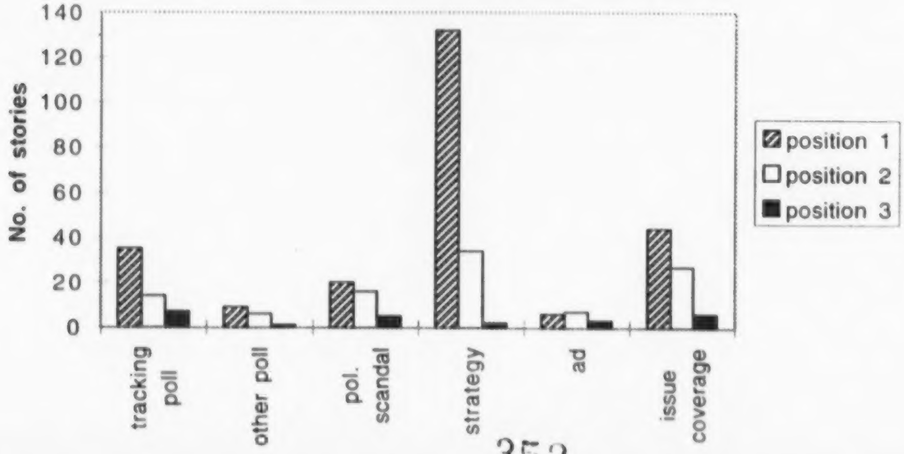
From September 1 to November 4, 284 campaign stories ran on the evening news of the four networks. Stories were coded for topics that were covered in the first position, second position , and third position. Of the 284 stories, 35 (12.33%) covered the network's tracking poll and 9 stories (3%) covered other polls as the first topic. Political scandal accounted for 20 stories (7%), and strategy used by candidates accounted for 132 stories (46%). Other categories included ad analysis with 6 stories (2%), 11 debate stories (3.8%), and 13 stories of Perot's attempt to get added to the debate (4.5%).

This left only 44 stories (15.4%) that dealt with issues in the first position. Adding poll, scandal, and strategy stories, 196 (69%) of the stories discussed those topics as opposed to issues. Ad analysis could be considered issue coverage because viewers often get issue information from ads.

Of the 284 stories, 104 also covered a second topic. Polling results accounted for 20 stories (19%), political scandal with 16 stories (15.3%), strategy with 34 stories (33%), and ad analysis with 7 stories (6%). Issue coverage included 27 stories (25%) in the second position.

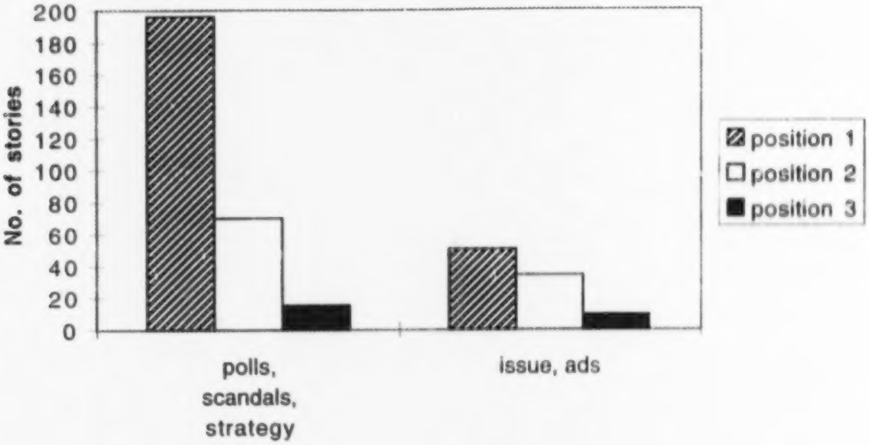
Of the 284 stories, 23 covered a third topic. Polling results accounted for 8 stories (30%), political scandal with 5 stories (22%), strategy with 2 stories (9%), ad analysis with 3 stories (13%), and 6 issue stories (26%). (Figure 1)

Figure 1. Topic Coverage by Position



If categories are collapsed and combined, then issue coverage and ad analysis is overwhelmed by polls, scandals, and strategy (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Collapsed Topics by Position



This analysis supports what other researchers have shown -- there is a severe lack of issue coverage in evening newscasts. Instead young voters -- indeed all voters -- are watching news that focuses on strategy, polling results, and scandal stories. However, this type of coverage may be more harmful to youth voters because they have not yet established voting as a citizenship pattern.

Issue coverage

Out of the 78 stories that were coded as having issue coverage in either of the three positions, 17 of those stories focused on campaign funding as an issue. The drug issue was discussed in 14 stories and crime in 11 stories. After those top areas, foreign policy and taxes were discussed in 9 stories, balancing the budget in 7 stories, the medical/pension problem in 6 stories. Education, affirmative action and welfare were mentioned in two stories. Abortion, prisons, immigration, and inflation were mentioned in 1 story each. (See Figure 3)

Only a few stories focused on youth alone. A September 9 ABC story looked at drug use and the campaign and showed TV ads on teen drugs from candidates Dole and Clinton. An older source was shown saying we don't consider the real drug issues. Other elements focused on teens modeling drug use after parents. This was the only story that covered teens exclusively without citing polls or strategy or other issues.

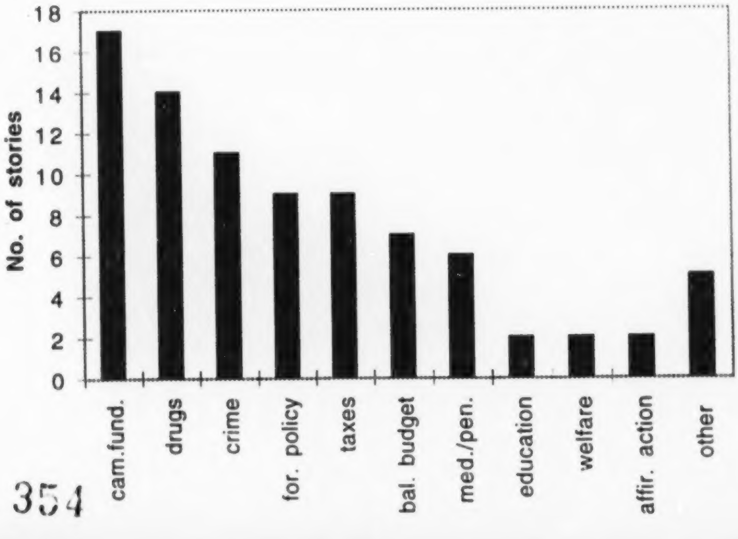
A second ABC story on September 16 looked at drug use by teenagers and the rise in drug use. Three students talked about drugs and the pressure on teens to use drugs. Two older sources talked about educating each new generation and commented on drugs and politicians.

A story from CNN on September 16 showed Dole and Kemp campaigning on crime and drugs and criticizing Clinton's liberal approach on crime. Also included was Clinton speaking on a crime report on youth violence and listing the laws that would make a difference in crime.

A November 3 CBS story on educational choices focused on a family that featured a college student. Also two University of Texas students talked about education-related issues and political choices.

ABC and CNN did attempt to woo the youth viewer by hiring two young reporters (Diamond et al., 1996). One of those reporters said that the typical news story leaves out the under-30-year-olds' viewpoint or doesn't use them as sources. This research would support that claim.

Figure 3. Number Of Issue Stories, All Positions



Youth as voting unit

From September 15 to November 4, 13 stories out of the 284 mentioned specific interest or age groups as voting units, with 5 interviewing random citizens. The specific interest or age groups mentioned as voters were: African-Americans (1 story), women (2 stories), single mothers (1 story), the elderly (1 story), inner city residents (1 story), Ohio voters (2 stories), California voters (2 stories), baby boomer families (1 story). After the November 5 election, three stories looked at voting units -- two stories at women and one at elderly. Youth as a specific interest or age group was not mentioned.

Turnout stories

Few stories talked about voter turnout. A November 3 CNN story discussed high voter turnout among new citizens and the importance of voting and how Americans take the privilege for granted. A November 4 ABC story talked about the Clinton team's concern about low voter turnout. Another November 4 NBC story showed campaigns rallying voters to encourage a voter turnout. As part of that story, voting analyst Curtis Gans talked about voter participation and turnout.

Election day was November 5. Post-election stories about turnout were few although print covered that story well (see introduction). A November 6 ABC story mentioned low voter turnout, and a CNN story on that date looked at vote statistics, focusing on the female vote for Clinton and the voters' emphasis on economic issues but none discussed the low youth turnout.

Issues tied to voters' concerns

Youth voters said they wanted to have political information tied to their lives. But this connection did not happen in 1996. Although only abstracts were examined, which made it sometimes difficult to tell direction of stories, 10 stories of the 284 definitely did tie issues to voters' concerns while 219 definitely did not. The others were coded as "can't tell from information given."

Conclusions

The above results are not startling. As cited elsewhere in this paper, analysts have seen the same trend of television campaign coverage for many elections. What is important about this continuing trend is that we are developing a nation of nonvoters. The barriers of registration have been dropped, and more young people are registered than ever. On the one hand, comparing the 1972 level to 1996 may be unfair. First, today's generation does not have to worry about the Vietnam War. Second, youths are marrying later than in 1972 so they do not have the community concerns of previous voters such as schools and taxes even though one out of four of this age group volunteers (Gonnerman).[3] On the other hand, as witnessed in 1996, total electorate participation is dropping. Unless these young voters start feeling a sense of engagement as opposed to alienation, voting participation may plummet even more.

Voting would appear to be one of the most vital participatory tools in a democracy. Gans called voting a religious act that is important not because elections are decided by one vote, but because "citizens want to contribute to a general will that will either give or withhold assent to a particular candidate or set of policies" (Gans, 1990). Elections are the ultimate tie between the governed and the governors in a democratic society; polling may inform the governing elites about citizens' views, but only elections can enforce those views (Fiorina, 1981).

How can television news respond to the crisis in youth voting? Many of the answers are obvious.

---

[3] In 1970, men's first marriage was at 23 compared to 27 in 1996. Women's first marriage was at 21 compared with 25 (Gonnerman).

Stop the polling stories. Rather than reacting to the candidates' schedule of campaigning and showing the "where Clinton spoke today" soundbite, networks could focus on a different issue each week -- an issue reflected in polls that tell what the American electorate is concerned about. Could this be done in newscasts or should it be done in other television news programming? Yes, spending a minute 10 seconds to 2 minutes to 5 minutes is not a great deal of time to learn about issues. The issue coverage may be superficial. But surely it would be no more superficial than the present strategy and polling coverage. Nor could it be more superficial than late-night comedians' opening monologues. Hold the candidates' feet to the fire; read their position papers and discuss them.

Graber suggests that television often uses formats that are boring and unattractive as the election drags out for several months and that news doesn't give answers directly relating to voters' lives (1994). On the other hand, Iyengar says that news is too episodic and lacks a thematic emphasis (1991). How could television news reconcile that research? News would have to move away from its emphasis on the candidates and improve coverage of political parties and present historical viewpoints and results. This approach may be a way to show that the candidate is not solely responsible for changes in the American system. Changes in policy affecting all voters are the result of many factors such as local and state governments, national Congress, economic factors, global policies, etc. All voters, but especially youth, would benefit from this coverage.

Network evening newscasts cannot stop the downward spiral alone. Improving youth voting patterns involves schools returning to their emphasis on civic responsibility. The mock elections run by 54 state and local groups, including national media organizations such as CNN, teach students about election issues (Pittman, 1995). A government report showed that states that staged mock elections in high schools using actual voting equipment had a substantially lower decline in voter turnout between 1980-1988 (GAO Report on voter turnout, 1993). In addition to schools and the media, political parties must improve their education efforts. However, the first step should be nightly newscasts because youth watch them.

In summary, what might those changes look like?

- •Much more issue information that might focus on only one issue a week. Move away totally from tracking polls, political scandals, and strategy coverage.

- •Citizens cannot use information unless it is framed in such a way that they see how information fits into the totality of politics (Graber). This includes using the pyramid format — the who, what, where and when in either the opening paragraph of the story or in anchor introductions to stories.

- •Information cannot be boring, which means continuing to utilize graphics and charts, etc.

- •Information must be repeated. One of the things often missing from television news is repetition (Robinson and Levy). As witnessed in the 1996 coverage of the Olympics or in advertisements, television indeed does know how to repeat although news programs seldom use the technique in creative ways. Also, television needs to include text on the screen in addition to verbalizing information.

- •Media need to set a standard and decide to stick with it throughout the process.

- •Treat viewers as citizens rather than customers. Rosen (1994) makes a distinction between reader/viewer and citizen:

> The first seeks to understand people as users of a product, customers of a business, which is one thing they are when they read or watch the news. The second sees them as members of a community, inescapably connected to other members, which is another thing they are when they encounter the news. (p. 16)

The low youth turnout of 1996 should be a call to action for television networks to improve greatly their information-giving skills.

References

Booth, William. (1996, November 5). Young voters reflect rise in apathy, discontent with politics. The Washington Post, p. A10.

Brians, Craig Leonard, and Wattenberg, Martin P. (1996). Campaign issue knowledge and salience: Comparing reception from TV commercials, TV news, and newspapers. American Journal of Political Science 40 (1), 172-193.

Campbell, Angus, and others. (1960). The American voter. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Midway Reprint, 1980.

Chaffee Steven H., Zhao, Xinshu, Leshner, Glenn. (1994, June). Political knowledge and the campaign media of 1992. Communication Research 21 (3). 305-324.

Chandler, Clay. (1996, February 18). Leave it to Beavis; the polls butt heads over the budget; the young will still get the bill. The Washington Post, p. C01.

Cook, Rhodes. (1995, May 15). '92 voter turnout: Apathy stymied. Congressional Quarterly Weekly, p. 1258.

Cultice, Wendell W. (1992). Youth's battle for the ballot. New York: Greenwood Press.

Depledge, Derrick. (1996, November 24). Young vote from 18 to 24 is 30%. Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, p. 10A.

Diamond, Edwin, Donaldson-Evans, Catherine, and Ginsberg, Leah. (1996, November 11). Panting after youth. The Weekly Standard, p. 34.

Downs, Anthony. (1957). The economic theory of democracy. New York: Harper & Row.

Fiorina, Morris P. (1981). Retrospective voting in American national elections. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press.

Fishbein, Martin, Middlestadt, Susan E., and Chung, Jean-Kyung. (1985). Predicting participation and choice, first-time voters in U.S. partisan elections. In Sidney Kraus & Richard M. Perloff (Eds.), Mass media and political thought, an information-processing approach, (pp. 65-82). Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Flanigan, William H. and Zingale, Nancy H. (1991). Political Behavior of the American Electorate. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.

Gans, Curtis B. (1990). Remobilizing the American electorate. Policy Studies Review 9, 527-538.

Gans, Curtis B. (1995). No magic bullets for democratic disaffection. Social Policy 26 (Fall), 31-39.

Graber, Doris A. (1994). Why voters fail information tests: Can the hurdles be overcome? Political Communication 11, 331-346.

GAO report on voter turnout. (1993, March). Congressional Digest.

Gonnerman, Jennifer. (1996, November 5). Bite the ballot. Viliage Voice 41, p. 39.

Hallin, Daniel C. (1997) Sound bite news, television coverage of elections. In Shanto Iyengar & Richard Reeves (Eds.), Do the media govern? (pp. 57-65). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Huerta, Raul. (1996, January 30). For the MTV generation, apathy looms as the toughest challenger in campaign '96. The Sacramento Bee, p. D1.

Iyengar, Shanto. (1991). Is anyone responsible?: How television frames political issues. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Jackson, Robert A. (1994). A reassessment of voter mobilization. Political Research Quarterly, 49 (2), 305-330.

Leland, John, and McCormick, John. (1996, July 1). The children of gridlock. Newsweek 128, p. 33.

Lewis, Pierce, McCracken, Casey, and Hunt, Roger. (1994, October). Politics: Who cares? American Demographics, pp. 20-26.

McLeod, Heather, and Cooper, Jamie. (1996, July 28). The nation/demographics; gen X is active locally, how about nationally? Los Angeles Times.

Milbrath, Lester W. (1981) Political participation. In The handbook of political behavior, vol. 4, ed. Samuel L. Long, 197-239. New York: Plenum Press.

Minzesheimer, Bob. (1996, November 7). Turnout takes a record downturn. USA TODAY, p. 3A.

Minzesheimer, Bob and Martha T. Moore. (1996, November 8). Lifting the curtain on low turnout. USA TODAY, p. 4A.

Ostrowidzki, Vic. (1996, November 24). U.S. young elected to forgo the polls. The Times Union, p. A10.

Patterson, Thomas E. (1994). Out of order. New York: Vintage Books.

Piltman, Michael. (1995, June/July). Student/parent mock election. State Government News 38, p. 15.

Reuters Daybook. (1996, February 6). Available NEXIS.

Robinson, John P., and Levy, Mark R. (1986). The main source, learning from television news. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.

Rosen, Jay and Davis, Merritt Jr. (1994). Public journalism: Theory and practice. Kettering Foundation.

Rosenthal, Harry F. (1996, November 7). The Associated Press Political Service. Available NEXIS.

Savidge, Martin. (1996, November 6). *Election '96 Political Analysis. CNN Morning News*. Atlanta: Available NEXIS.

Schmitt, Eric. (1996, November 6). The 1996 elections: The presidency -- the voters: *The New York Times*, p. B6.

Young voters say issues more important than party. (1996, February 7). Reuters, Limited. Available NEXIS.

Teixeira, Ruy A. (1987). *Why Americans don't vote; turnout decline in the United States, 1960-1984*. New York: Greenwood Press.

Teixeira, Ruy A. (1992). *The disappearing American voter*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Uebling, Mark D. (1991, November). All-American apathy. *American Demographics*. p. 30.

Young voters. (1996, November 4). *US News & World Report* 121, p. 28.

Vobejda, Barbara. (1996, November 7). Just under half of possible voters went to the polls. *The Washington Post*, pg. A30.

Voters won't vote unless political discourse changes. (1996, June 14). *National Catholic Reporter* 32, p. 28.

Wattenberg, Martin P. (1990). *The decline of American political parties, 1952-1988*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Whitney, David. (1995, December 30). Youth carry banner of apathy. *Sacramento Bee*, p. A1.

Woodruff, Judy. Anchor on Inside Politics Extra, CNN. Feb. 9, 1996. Available NEXIS.